

The relation of incarnation to atonement in the
Christology of R.S. Candlish, and its
contribution to the development of
Scottish Theology

by

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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of R.S. Candlish, and its contribution to the development of Scottish
Theology

The object of this thesis is to show how R.S. Candlish sets forth the relation of incarnation to atonement in a truly Biblical way. Candlish was brought up in a theological tradition in which the atonement was conceived of almost wholly in terms of Christ's passive obedience. This exclusive emphasis on Christ's passive obedience resulted in a corresponding neglect of the place of the Incarnation in theology, especially in its relation to the Atonement. Candlish, in his theology, restored the doctrine of the Incarnation to a central place in two quite decisive ways.

First, in seeking to recover the long-neglected Biblical teaching on the sonship of believers, Candlish was disposed to give a much more central place to the Incarnation. This was necessary, since, in his view, the sonship of believers took its rise in the One Eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ. Since originally and primarily there was but one Sonship - Christ's very own - it was necessary that the Word become flesh in order that sonship might be revealed, communicated, and shared with men. Thus Candlish was led to stress the human nature of Christ in which He enjoyed the life of Sonship. Indeed, for Candlish, true evangelical sonship stands or falls with the real humanity of Christ. Thus believers come to share Christ's Sonship by union with Him in His human nature. And so Candlish defines Adoption not forensically as in Federal Theology and in the Westminster Confession of Faith, but as union and communion with Christ in His Sonship. In recovering this Biblical view of Sonship which takes its rise in Christ's Sonship revealed through the Incarnation, Candlish was opposing the view that the Incarnation is merely instrumental.

The second way in which Candlish restored the Incarnation to a central place in his theology, was by showing that in a truly Biblical doctrine of atonement, it is impossible to separate incarnation from atonement, since these are really two aspects of the one work of God in Jesus Christ for man's redemption. To do this, meant that he had to oppose the teaching of Federal Theology with its exclusive emphasis on the passive obedience of Christ in the work of atonement. Following Irenaeus and Calvin, Candlish taught that atonement was wrought by "the whole course of His obedience." Thus he was led to place greater weight on the life and ministry of Jesus and the saving significance of His humanity. Atonement includes both the active and passive obedience of Christ, beginning with the humiliation of the Son of God taking our flesh, and reaching its climax in His death on the Cross. The death of Christ is not the whole atonement; rather it is the climax of all that He has been doing throughout His whole life of earthly obedience. Candlish related the incarnation to the atonement by emphasizing the importance of grounding atonement in the fact of the hypostatic union. Indeed, atonement was the hypostatic union in reconciling action. Candlish further showed how incarnation and atonement are related by stressing that the work of Christ is both substitutionary and representative in character. Substitution stresses the forensic aspect of atonement, while representation emphasizes the incarnational aspect.

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CHAPTER I

The Relationship of Incarnation to Atonement in Scottish Theology

In a fairly recently published book¹ Professor George Hendry of Princeton has argued at length that the main reason for the present-day "fragmentation of the Gospel" lies in the failure of Christian theology properly to relate the Incarnation of Jesus Christ to the Atonement. Hendry points out that this failure to relate the Incarnation to the Atonement can be seen clearly in the two very different emphases which we have in Eastern and Western Theology. In the main, the Eastern Church has laid great, indeed almost exclusive emphasis, upon the fact of the Incarnation, while the Western Church, on the other hand, has regarded the Atonement as the very heart of Christian theology. The viewpoint that the Eastern Church has stood for an "incarnational" theology, and the West for a theology of "atonement" is one that is shared by theologians of different schools and ages.² W. Adams Brown, in an article in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* writes,

"... to the Greek, unlike the Latin, the supreme evil from which man needs to be delivered is not guilt but corruption. Through sin, humanity becomes subject to the law of death. The mind is darkened through ignorance, and the entire nature, as mortal, is destined to destruction. What is needed for the salvation of man, therefore, is not simply forgiveness, but a new transforming power which shall enlighten the mind by the revelation of truth, and transform that which is corrupt and mortal into incorruption. Such a Divine and transforming power entered humanity through the incarnation. In Christ very God Himself became man, that by partaking of the limitations and sufferings of His human children He might transform them into the likeness of His glorious and divine life. In the words ... of Irenaeus, 'He became what we are, that He might make us what He is ...'³

1 - The Gospel of the Incarnation - G.S. Hendry. S.C.M. 1959.

2 - But Cf The Mediator, E. Brunner pp. 399 ff. for another point of view.

3 - The Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics - Ed. James Hastings Vol. 5. Article on: Expiation & Atonement, p. 642.

T.B. Kilpatrick writing in the same encyclopaedia, says,

"... Greek thought proclaims the Incarnation to be the method of salvation ... The ruling thought is transformation of man's being, till he become what God is. Greek theology makes everything of the Incarnation."¹

And Robert Mackintosh puts it plainly and succinctly, when he writes that in Eastern Theology,

"The Incarnation is itself the Atonement."²

The Eastern Church, writes Hendry, was chiefly concerned with

"the doctrine of the Incarnation . . . ; the Incarnation the assumption of our nature by the Eternal Word, was to them the means of effecting a transmutation or "transubstantiation" of the corrupted nature of man ... their interest in the Christological problem was not psychological ... it was soteriological. They were not greatly concerned with solving the psychological problem of how divinity and humanity can be united in one person; what made the union of full divinity and full humanity in the one person of Christ important to them was the conviction that only one who was "of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead" could possess divine properties of incorruptibility (aphtharsia) and immortality (athanasia), and only one who was "at the same time of one substance with us as regards manhood" could impart them to us."³

Hendry then goes on to point out that,

"The Definition of Chalcedon has nothing to say about the historical work of the incarnate Christ; it is entirely concerned with the terms of the hypostatic union, because this was regarded as the decisive factor in the Gospel. By uniting our human nature with his Divine nature Christ has (in principle at least) transformed its substance We search in vain in the writings of the fathers for any considered treatment of the question, "How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?" The question simply did not exist for them, because, they held, we are already partakers of Christ by virtue of his assumption of our nature, which established an ontological relation between us and him. By the same token it was relatively unimportant to define what Christ wrought in our nature; for the decisive thing in our salvation was not so much the precise character of his work as rather the community of nature between us and him in virtue of which his work accrues to us."⁴

1 - The Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics - Ed. James Hastings Vol. II Article on: Soteriology, p. 704

2 - Historic Theories of Atonement - Robert Mackintosh, p. 90 London: Hodder & Stoughton: 1920

3 - G.S. Hendry, op. cit. pp. 25-26

4 - G.S. Hendry, op. cit. p. 26

At this point, Hendry's conclusion is as follows:

"The fragmentation of the gospel was begun through the pre-occupation of the Greek fathers with Christology"¹

a Christology in which the Incarnation was so stressed as to virtually deny to the atoning work of Christ any real place in their theology. Thus historically, the problem of the failure to properly relate the incarnation of Christ to his atonement, begins as far back as the Christology of the Fathers in the Eastern Church.

In Eastern theology then, the fact of the Incarnation was all-important. In the eyes of the Fathers, the redemptive act of God in Christ had its centre in the Incarnation of the Eternal Word. In the West, however, the theological pendulum swung sharply to the other side, and now it was the atoning death of Christ which became the all-important centre of theology.

"Latin theology took over from the Greeks the conception of salvation through incarnation; but, in contrast to the Greeks, the Latins found the evil from which men needed deliverance not so much in corruption as in punishment. Where the Greeks thought of God as the Ultimate Reality, the Latins regarded Him as the Supreme Law-giver or Judge. Hence the death of Christ acquired in Roman theology an independent significance which it did not possess in that of the Greek Church. It was the Divinely appointed atonement for the guilt of man's sin and incarnation took place primarily in order that this atonement might be wrought This theory first finds clear and consistent expression in Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*."²

Now that Anselm had turned the attention of the theological world to the fact of the atonement, there was, writes Hendry,

"an opportunity to recover something of the wholeness of the Gospel"³

1 - G.S. Hendry, op. cit. p.28

2 - The Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics - Ed. James Hastings Vol. 5, Article on Expiation and Atonement, p. 643

3 - G.S. Hendry, op. cit. p. 28

a wholeness that had been lost by the inordinate stress of the Eastern Church on the fact of the Incarnation divorced from the fact of the atonement. Hendry argues that this recovery of the wholeness of the Gospel might well have been

"part of the intention of Anselm for in calling his treatise "Why the God-man?" rather than "Why did the God-man die?" he pointed to the Christological question, and he skilfully attempted to integrate the Chalcedonian Christology in his interpretation of the atonement. But as the debate continued, interest came to be increasingly concentrated on the atonement, to the relative neglect of the incarnation, and the consequence was the development of theories of the atonement that are barely compatible with the doctrine of the incarnation."¹

Professor Hendry is undoubtedly right in believing that Anselm sought to bridge the gap between the Incarnation and the Atonement, but historically, however, no such bridging of the gap took place, and very quickly in the West, the fact of the atoning death of Christ became uppermost in men's minds, and just as in the Eastern Church everything had been made to pivot on the fact of the Incarnation, now in the West, everything in theology was seen in the light of the atoning death of Christ, an atoning death which had largely come to be separated from His Incarnation and Life.

This then is the theological heritage that has been passed on to the West today; a heritage in which the gospel is presented for the most part, in a fragmentary way, largely due to the way that the Incarnation and Atonement have been unduly emphasized, one at the expense of the other, so that even today, the Incarnation is still emphasized in the East, and the Atonement (somewhat narrowly conceived) is emphasized in the West. Shortly before he died, the Bishop of Oxford argued that if:

1 - G.S. Hendry, op. cit. p. 28

"neither the doctrine of the atonement nor that of the incarnation is held today with that fulness of conviction and understanding which once it commanded," the reason is the false exaltation of the one against the other as the fundamental Christian truth, and he pleaded for coherent thinking about them: "Only as they are brought together once more in their fulness will either of them become intelligible, and the two together have converting power."¹

In Scotland, naturally enough, the tradition that was followed was that of the West, in which the main emphasis in theology lay in the death of Christ. Principal Tulloch in his book has said that

"It had not been customary in Scotland to dwell on the Incarnation in connection with the sufferings and atonement of Christ."²

One has only to examine the theological literature in Scotland to see where the emphasis lies. There are a number of justly famous books on the Atonement in Scotland: One thinks of the famous books by John McLeod Campbell on: The Nature of the Atonement: the two outstanding books on the same subject, by James Denney, The Death of Christ, and The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation. One could quote P.T. Forsyth's books, especially his, The Work of Christ and The Cruciality of the Cross. Again, one could mention, A.B. Macaulay's The Death of Jesus, or H.R. Mackintosh's, The Christian Experience of Forgiveness. To name these few books, is but to pick out the most famous from a very impressive list. On the other hand, hardly anything of moment has come from the pen of Scotsmen on the subject of the Incarnation, certainly nothing comparable to Bishop Gore's Bampton Lectures on The Incarnation, or R.L. Ottley's, The Doctrine of the Incarnation.

From the Reformation onwards, it is not only true to say that the central theme in Scottish theology has been the atonement, it is also true to say

1 - Quoted by G.S. Hendry, op. cit. pp. 30-31

2 - Movements of Religious Thought in Britain During the Nineteenth Century - John Tulloch, London, 1885 - pp. 158-159.

that in Scotland there has been a somewhat undue emphasis not simply on the Atonement, but on one aspect of the Atonement, namely the extent of the Atonement. That this is the case becomes immediately obvious when one casts a glance over the Scottish theological scene since the seventeenth century, for what one finds during this period of Scottish theological history is the interesting fact that most, if not all, of the great theological controversies in Scotland during the above-mentioned period, have been waged on this precise issue of the Extent of the Atonement. To take two notable illustrations of this point, we turn first to that controversy known as The Marrow Controversy. The origin of this controversy is to be found in the introduction of a slim volume called, The Marrow of Modern Divinity, by an Englishman called Edward Fisher, into Scotland by James Hog of Carnock, in 1717. The book then fell into the hands of Thomas Boston who was greatly excited by its teaching and who was responsible for having the volume republished with his own notes. There was a reaction to the Marrow teaching in the Church headed by Principal Hadow and his followers, who were quick to accuse the Marrowmen of perverting the Gospel with the "sly Antinomian teaching" of the Marrow doctrine. In the year 1720 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passed an Act in which it declared that certain passages in the Marrow were contrary to the teaching of Holy Scripture, as well as contrary to the Westminster Confession and the Catechisms. The following year, 1721, a petition was laid on the table of the General Assembly asking that the sentence of the previous year be repealed, but the petition was turned down and "the Twelve Marrow Men were rebuked and admonished by the Moderator."¹ What was the distinctive teaching of this Puritan document,

1 - The Confessions of the Church of Scotland - C.G. McCrie Edinburgh:
Macniven & Wallace: 1907 - p. 123

the Marrow of Modern Divinity, which, together with its upholders, was so roundly condemned by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland of 1720? Here is how C.G. McCrie sums it up:

"... the evangel of the grace of God finds summing up in an expression which has become historical. 'God the Father', it is said, 'as He is in His Son Jesus Christ, moved with nothing but His free love to mankind lost, hath made a deed of gift and grant unto them all, that whosoever of them all shall believe in this His Son shall not perish, but have eternal life.' On the ground of this gift to all mankind the gospel commission is thus paraphrased: 'Go and tell every man without exception that here are good news for him: Christ is dead for him, and if he will take Him and accept of His righteousness he shall have Him.' In its condemnation of Marrow theology the Assembly charged its upholders with believing in universal redemption, because they spoke of God's deed of gift to all mankind as constituting the ground of the offer and the warrant for accepting it. In answer to this the Secession divines replied that they in common with all the Marrow men rejected the doctrine of universal redemption, and they were led to give fuller development to Westminster teaching regarding the redemption that is in Christ Jesus than had been done by their Calvinistic predecessors. The purchase and application of redemption, said they, are confined to the elect. But the warrant to receive Christ is common to all the sinful men and women of Adam's race, Gospel giving is not giving into possession, but giving by way of offer."¹

"Christ is the Saviour of the world. His salvation is a common salvation, in which lost mankind have a common interest, it being open to and warrantable for all to take possession of Christ and the whole of His salvation."²

Today, it is generally conceded that the leading principles for which the Marrow men were contending in their day, were really principles that lay at the very heart of the Gospel as proclaimed by the Reformers themselves. Indeed, in a very real sense, the Marrow men were but following in the footsteps of the Reformation in its teaching. In an article in the British and Foreign Evangelical Review, the writer says:

1 - C.G. McCrie - op. cit. pp. 123-125

2 - C.G. McCrie - op. cit. p. 125

"Nothing is more remarkable in the writings of these champions of the faith, (i.e. the Reformers) than the freedom and boldness with which they enunciate the tidings of grace ... the theology of the Marrow its leading principles in two words - full atonement and free salvation In their system, the atonement of the Saviour stood forth in all its plenitude, as a complete satisfaction given by the Surety of sinners in their room, securing pardon and life for all whom he represented. They did not consider it necessary to abridge its virtues and merits in order to extend them to all men, or to furnish ministers with a warrant to do so in the offers of the gospel; nor did they deem it essential to find out a warrant for God to justify Him in making these offers. They saw no inconsistency in preaching a full Christ as well as a free Christ to mankind at large, and sinners of all kinds; for they found this already done to their hand by Christ himself and his apostles. To the believer they said, Think on the love of the Saviour fixed upon you from all eternity, shedding his blood for you, drawing you to himself and fitting you for the kingdom he hath purchased for you. To the sinner they said, Look not to the secret purposes of God or to the intention of the priest in offering himself, but look to the sacrifice offered which is sufficient for all. We do not say "Christ died for thee;" this would imply a knowledge of the secret purposes of the Most High .. but we may say "Christ is dead for thee", that is, he is exhibited as crucified and slain for thee - for thy benefit, for thee to look for salvation Nothing therefore, can be more Scriptural and more simple than the view which the Marrow-men gave of Saving Faith. They represented it as trusting in Christ alone for salvation"¹

The verdict of the General Assembly of 1720 notwithstanding, we can confidently affirm that the Marrow-men stood closer to both Scripture and the Reformation theology when they set forth their distinctive teaching regarding the Atonement. Another movement in the life of the Scottish Church which illustrates our point that from the Reformation onwards, Scotland was not only pre-occupied with the Atonement to the virtual exclusion of the Incarnation, but also with the extent of the Atonement, is that of the Atonement Controversy in connexion with the Secession Church.

The Secession Church in Scotland had its theological roots in the Marrow theology. Indeed, some of the original members of the Secession Church had been most active in the Marrow Controversy.² Naturally enough, the Marrow

1 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1853 "The Marrow Controversy" - pp. 411-440.

2 - For an account of: The History of the Atonement Controversy in Connexion with the Secession Church from its Origin to the Present Time - See the book by that name by - Rev. A. Robertson: Wm. Oliphant & Sons: Edinburgh: 1845

theology was woven into the very fabric of the Secession Church theology.

However, in the first half of the nineteenth century there was to be observed a tendency on the part of some members of that Church to depart from the "traditional" theology of the Marrow-men and to attempt to stretch the doctrines of the Marrow beyond their original scope and design. In the beginning the most prominent name was that of the Rev. James Morison. Morison, together with his followers, affirmed at the beginning that they were merely following the 'main scope' of the Westminster Confession, at the same time insisting that they accepted the position of the Marrow men and the first Seceders. But, as Dr. C.G. McCrie has pointed out,

"... in reality they went further than the Bostons and the Erskines For the Morisonians held that our Lord in dying sustained no special relation to elect persons, but was the substitute of the whole human race, that His Atonement was made equally and in every sense for all men, and that the Divine purpose of atonement was prior in the order of nature to election, God having appointed it, not to secure the salvation of any, but to render the salvation of all possible."¹

Morison

"admitted indeed the doctrine of election, in virtue of which the salvation of a definite number was secured, but as he conceived the purpose of atonement to be prior in the order of nature to the decree of election, the decree of election not having respect to the provision of the atonement, but solely to its application, Mr. Morison contended, that the atonement itself was to be viewed, not as having been made with special intentions towards some, but as having been made with the same gracious intentions towards all."²

The Synod of the Secession Church had no difficulty in showing that Morison's teaching differed quite radically from that of the Marrow-men and the first Seceders. The Bostons and the Erskines, together with other fathers of the Secession Church, had certainly maintained the free proclamation of a full and free gospel to all of mankind sinners without exception,

1 - The Confessions of the Church of Scotland - C.G. McCrie Edinburgh; MacNiven & Wallace: 1907 - p. 134.

2 - History of the Atonement Controversy in Connexion with the Secession Church from its Origin to the Present Time - By Rev. A. Robertson - p. 4.

but with equal plainness they had also taught that in His atoning death, Jesus Christ stands in a special relation to the elect for whose salvation He died. Dr. Stark, speaking on behalf of the Synod which ultimately condemned Morison's teaching, said,

"... the Scriptures teach us ... that Christ in making satisfaction for sin, did bear, by divine constitution, a special or peculiar relation to some of the human family, and in coincidence with the purposes of God, did design to secure their salvation by that satisfaction. The Bible ... represents their pardon, acceptance, reconciliation, redemption, sanctification, and salvation, as the purposed, and promised results of his atoning righteousness."¹

It is not difficult to understand why the Synod of the Secession Church should have so roundly condemned Mr. Morison's theological position; they could hardly do anything else with teaching that was at variance with the Westminster Confession and the Marrow teaching, and which, when all was said and done, was Pelagian to the core since it taught that in reality, the Atonement did not accomplish anything, but merely provided the opportunity for salvation. For Morison, the Atonement was but instrumental!

The whole controversy caused the Secession Church to examine closely the special relations in which Christ stood to both the elect and the world, and believing that the heart of the problem was here the Synod of the Secession Church issued repeated statements that,

"the atonement has two aspects, - special and general, - or, in other words, he who made the atonement stands in different relations to mankind. To the elect he stands in special relations, growing out of special engagements, in virtue of which his atonement secures their salvation, whilst, to those not included in these specialties, he stands in other relations which we term general relations, relations which entitle us to affirm that the atonement has such a reference to them, that it opens the door of mercy, and constitutes to them the ground upon which salvation is offered to their acceptance: so that, if they perish, it is not because no provision of mercy exists available for their deliverance, but because they will not avail themselves of the provision which has been actually made. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."²

1 - Rev. A. Robertson - op. cit. - p. 4

2 - A. Robertson - op. cit. p. 19

Two other prominent protagonists in the Atonement Controversy in the Secession Church were Professors John Brown and Robert Balmer. Both were accused of false teaching with respect to the doctrine of the atonement. In a spirited defence before the Synod, Professor Balmer said:

"As I wish to prevent the possibility of misapprehending my sentiments on this subject, I shall state them in a somewhat different form. The proposition, 'Christ died for men' has been employed in three different senses. In the sense that he died with the intention and to the effect of securing salvation, I hold that he died only for the elect. In the sense that he died to procure easier terms of salvation and grace to enable men to comply with these terms, I hold that he died for no man. In the sense that he died to remove legal obstacles in the way of human salvation and open a door of mercy, I hold that he died for all men."¹

The controversies in which the Rev. Robert Morison, and Professors John Brown and Robert Balmer, were among the leading principals, centred in the endangering of the special reference of the atonement. A few years later the pendulum had swung to the other side, and Robertson in his book, could write,

"the danger which threatens us ... is not now Morisonianism, subverting the special reference of the atonement, but Marshallism, subverting the general."²

The most prominent name connected with this view of the atonement whereby the universal offers of the gospel are hedged around with all manner of qualifications as to obscure the gospel of free grace, is that of Dr. Marshall. Mr. Robertson, in his History, underlines

"the qualified manner in which the universal offers of the gospel are spoken of by Dr. Marshall in his Second Treatise on the Atonement:- 'The great God offers salvation to those who believe and to them alone. The salvation is avowedly a limited salvation - the salvation of a chosen people.'"

1 - A. Robertson - op. cit. - p. 17.

2 - A. Robertson - op. cit. - p. 20.

And Robertson asks somewhat pointedly:

"Is this an offer of salvation to all?"¹

Robertson goes on:

"How different from this cautious mode of statement is the full gospel of the Marrow:- 'This deed of gift and grant', says Boston, 'is conceived in the most ample terms, without any restriction to any particular set of men. 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.' You see here it goes wide as the world - the world of men, to exclude ... none of the family of fallen Adam." ... according to Dr. Marshall he loved none but his own."²

Further historical investigation into the theological history of the Church in Scotland would only serve to underscore what the Marrow Controversy and the Atonement Controversy in the Secession Church have already taught us, namely, that during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, Scotland was preoccupied with the problem of the Atonement, and especially with the extent of the Atonement. The relation of the Incarnation to the Atonement had no place in the theological discussions of these centuries, and the fact that there might be a saving significance to the Incarnation hardly entered the theological heads of Scotland.

This one-sided emphasis of which we have been speaking, whereby the atonement is viewed not in relation to the Incarnation, nor even in its own magnificent scope, but rather in terms of its extent, resulted in a far too narrow view of redemption that failed to do justice to the broad Scriptural testimony itself. Furthermore, it meant that the atonement was treated

"incidentally under the general head of the offices executed by Christ as Mediator. In accordance with this mode so common at the time, we have no distinct chapter in our Confession ... and no separate question in our Catechisms on the atonement of Christ. The practical effect of this mode of treatment need hardly be pointed out. It tends to circumscribe our views of the glorious work of Christ by presenting it only on one of its sides; it leaves many portions of Scripture bearing on the nature, the

1 - A. Robertson - *op. cit.* - n. 25

2 - A. Robertson, *op. cit.* - p. 25

necessity, the value, and the efficacy of the atonement, unexplained; and keeping the eye fixed on the intentions of Christ in dying it necessarily prevents us from forming true conceptions of the death itself.¹

If this one-sided view of the atonement which exalts the extent at the expense of other equally important aspects is to be found in the Scottish Church's subordinate standards, it is to be found much more explicitly and plainly taught in, what for many years was regarded as almost equal in importance with the subordinate standards, namely, The Sum of Saving Knowledge. This curious document, which, according to Wodrow the historian, is the composite work of two authors, David Dickson and James Durham, was, for many years bound together with the Church's subordinate standards, thus giving it at least the appearance of having equal importance in matters of doctrine, though no permission was either sought or given for including The Sum of Saving Knowledge in a single volume together with the Church's subordinate standards.

There can be no doubt whatsoever that the intention of the authors of The Sum of Saving Knowledge was:

"to pronounce the mind of the Church of Scotland upon the Arminian points more decisively than the Confession had done ... It proceeds on the assumption that there are two covenants connected with man's salvation: the covenant of Redemption between God the Father and the Son from all eternity, and the covenant of grace made between God and the believer in time. This distinction implies that the covenant of grace involves certain conditions which must be fulfilled by the Saviour before he can partake of its blessings ... Another peculiarity of this treatise lies in the prominence which is given throughout to the doctrine of election. The whole system of gospel truth is formulated with a special reference to this doctrine. Thus, instead of simply stating as is done in the Confession, that the end of Christ's death was to satisfy Divine justice and to reconcile us to God, it is said that "God having freely chosen unto life a certain number of lost mankind, for

1 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1868 (No author given) Scoto-Calvinism & Anglo-Puritanism. An Irenicum pp. 255-275

the glory of His rich grace, did give them, before the world began, unto God the Son, appointed Redeemer, that upon condition He would submit Himself to the Law as surety for them, and satisfy Divine justice for them, by giving obedience in their name, even unto the suffering of the cursed death of the cross, he should ransom and redeem them all from sin and death and purchase unto them righteousness and eternal life." No notice is taken of such passages as John 3:16 "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." And when commenting on 2 Cor. 5:19, "... God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" care is taken to qualify the expression by uniformly representing it as the elect world." The outward ordinances of the gospel are represented as appointed "to make the elect partakers of the covenant of grace, and all the rest that are called to be inexcusable;" and while it is granted that in his word the Lord makes offers of grace to all sinners, this is qualified by what follows, "upon condition of faith in Jesus Christ and whosoever do confess their sin, accept of Christ offered, and submit themselves to his ordinances, he will have both them and their children received into the honour and privileges of the covenant of grace." We need only add, that according to this Sum of Saving Knowledge faith does not carry within it the nature of assurance ..."¹

It will be clear then that during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, the atonement has dominated theological thought in Scotland. It is further clear that both in its theological documents and in its theological history, the great emphasis has been upon the extent of the atonement, and that this undue emphasis has resulted in a very one-sided view of redemption together with a complete failure to relate the atonement to the incarnation.

Not everyone, however, was happy with the "traditional" way of viewing the atonement as expounded in The Sum of Saving Knowledge, and eventually a reaction did set in to this narrow view of the atonement which stressed one aspect at the expense of the others, and failed signally to properly relate the atonement to Christ's Incarnation.

1 - The Brit. & For. Evangelical Review - 1868 - p. 265

One of the first men to react to the above view of the atonement divorced from the Incarnation was that strange man of genius Edward Irving. (Robert Smith Candlish sat at the feet of Irving for a considerable time while he was a student in the theological halls in Glasgow, but he doesn't give us a hint anywhere as to whether or not he learned anything about the relation of Incarnation to Atonement from Irving). Unfortunately, Irving has not left us anything of a permanent nature which contributes to our knowledge of the subject, though there can be no doubt, as Tulloch says in his book, that Irving was aware of and deeply interested in the problem of the connection between the Incarnation and the Atonement.¹

Another name that figures prominently in this reaction to a narrow view of the atonement, is that of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen.

"At the root of his teaching lay his vivid apprehension of God as a living Being continually acting upon the lives of men ... Erskine was entirely possessed by the consciousness of God ... With regard to the Atonement Erskine insisted that God's forgiveness of the sinner is something already past and given. It in no way depends on anything which men have to do ... Pardon ... is already an eternal fact ... But pardon is not salvation. The pardon is given freely; the salvation depends on our acceptance of the pardon."²

The main lines of Erskine's teaching are to be found in two of his books:

The Brazen Serpent

and The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel

"Erskine's influence was far-reaching ... Particularly was this the case with regard to the doctrine of the Atonement. He was the inspirer of John McLeod Campbell whose volume, the Nature of the Atonement, would probably never have seen the light if it had not been for Erskine's earlier writings on the subject."³

1 - Movements of Religious Thought in Britain During the Nineteenth Century - John Tulloch

2 - The Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century - V.F. Storr - p. 355 Longman, Green, & Co. London: 1913

3 - V.F. Storr - op. cit. p. 355

At this point in our discussion of the relation of Incarnation to Atonement, we now come to one of the most important names, and one of the most important books bearing on our discussion. The name of the book is, The Nature of the Atonement, and the name of the author is the justly celebrated name of John McLeod Campbell. Here is an impartial English verdict on McLeod Campbell's book:

"McLeod Campbell's volume on the Atonement (is the) most important English contribution to dogmatic theology... in the first sixty years of the nineteenth century."¹

The same author then goes on to say that the main purpose of McLeod Campbell's book is

"to moralise the doctrine of the Atonement and to destroy the legal and forensic view."²

In his book on the Atonement, McLeod Campbell begins with the Incarnation,

"and his idea is to see the Atonement developing itself naturally and necessarily out of Christ's relation to men as the Incarnate Son."³

Here is how the author himself puts it:

"The faith of the atonement presupposes the faith of the incarnation. It may be also said historically that the faith of the incarnation has usually had conjoined with it the faith of the atonement. The great question which has divided men as to these fundamental doctrines of the Faith has been the relation in which they stand to each other - which was to be regarded as primary, which secondary? - was an atonement the great necessity in reference to man's salvation, out of which the necessity for the incarnation arose, because a divine Saviour alone could make an adequate atonement for sin? - or, is the incarnation to be regarded as the primary and highest fact in the history of God's relation to man, in the light of which God's interest in man and purpose for man can alone be truly seen? - and is the atonement to be contemplated as taking place in order to the fulfilment of the divine purpose for man which the incarnation

1 - V.F. Storr - op. cit. p. 424

2 - V.F. Storr - op. cit. p. 424

3 - The Christian View of God and the World - James Orr Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot: 1897 - p. 311

reveals
Assuming the incarnation, I have sought to realise the divine mind in Christ as perfect Sonship towards God and perfect Brotherhood towards men, and, doing so, the incarnation has appeared developing itself naturally and necessarily as the atonement."¹

McLeod Campbell's basic thought then is, that, beginning with the Incarnation through which the Son of God takes human flesh, the atonement develops itself naturally and necessarily out of Christ's relation to men as the Incarnate Son. Campbell also distinguishes two sides in the work of Christ. First, there is Christ's dealing with men on the part of God; and second, there is His dealing with God on the part of man. McLeod Campbell also utterly repudiates any idea of a penal substitutionary act on the part of Christ to purchase forgiveness for men. James Orr comments as follows:

"The peculiarity of his theory, and here undoubtedly it becomes artificial and indefensible, lies in the proposal to substitute a vicarious repentance for sins, and confession of sins, for the vicarious endurance of the penalties of transgression. There is here, first, a confusion between repentance for sins and confession of them. The idea that Christ could in any sense repent of the sins of the humanity which He represented, could bring to God "a perfect repentance" for them, is one totally inadmissible, even though his premise was granted, which it cannot be, that a perfect repentance would of itself constitute Atonement. That Christ should confess our sins in His high-priestly intercession for us with God is, on the other hand, not inadmissible, but is rightly classed as a part of His substitutionary activity for us."²

Orr goes on to point out that when we look at the kernel of McLeod Campbell's theory and get behind his unfortunate expressions about a perfect repentance,

"we obtain light on the Atonement which is ... valuable. Dr. Campbell himself constantly insists through all his volume ... that with the most perfect apprehension of what the sin of man was, on the one hand, and of what the mind of God towards sin, and sin's due at the hands of God, were, on the other, there went up from the depths of Christ's sinless humanity a perfect "Amen" to the righteous judgment of God against Sin."³

1 - The Nature of the Atonement - 4th Edition - 1959 - John McLeod Campbell. James Clarke & Co. Ltd. London - p. xxv

2 - James Orr - op. cit. - p. 311

3 - James Orr - op. cit. - p. 312

Whatever the shortcomings or criticisms that may be made of his book, McLeod Campbell has placed Scottish Theology for ever in his debt by virtue of his magnificent contribution to the literature of the atonement. His avowed aim was to formulate a doctrine of the atonement that was a necessary development of the incarnation. He saw clearly that:

"if the atonement be the development of the incarnation, how can we stop short with the fact of the incarnation itself as if it were the whole Gospel?"¹

He further saw that:

"if the atonement is rightly conceived of as a development of the incarnation, the relation of the atonement to the incarnation is indissoluble ..."²

And if at the end of the day, McLeod Campbell did not quite fulfil his promise and give us a doctrine of the atonement that was fully related to the incarnation, at least this much is certain, he pointed the way towards a doctrine in which the incarnation and the atonement would take their proper place, and he made it impossible ever again to consider a doctrine of the atonement that would not take as its starting-point the fact of the Incarnation.

It is at once the merit of Robert Smith Candlish, minister of St. George's Free Church, and sometimes Principal of the New College, Edinburgh, that he saw and grasped something of the nature of the problem posed in the relation of the Incarnation and the Atonement. Candlish understood, as few did before him, that the Incarnation and Atonement must not be separated in a truly Biblical theology, and that a proper relating of these two central doctrines is essential to a Christology that is both Biblical and Reformed. In his theological writings, Candlish sought to work out the relationship between Incarnation and Atonement, and it is the aim of this thesis to show that he did so in a way that has contributed immensely to our understanding of the problem;

1 - McLeod Campbell - ~~op. cit.~~ - p. xxviii

2 - McLeod Campbell - op. cit. - p. xxvii

that he was so successful in his attempt that he has placed Scottish theology for ever in his debt.

Robert Smith Candlish was born in Edinburgh on March 23rd, 1806. When he was twelve years of age, he entered Glasgow University as a student, graduating with the M.A. degree some five years later. In 1823, Candlish entered the Divinity Hall of the Church of Scotland in Glasgow, and during his years there, his biographer¹ tells us that he distinguished himself as a student in theology. Candlish himself, sometimes spoke of the inadequacy of his theological training at Glasgow,² and indeed on one occasion at least, he told his students at the New College in Edinburgh how fortunate they were in their theological course by comparison.

While he was a student at the Divinity Hall, Candlish used to sit at the feet of Dr. Chalmers on Sunday morning, and at the feet of Chalmers's gifted, if somewhat erratic assistant, Edward Irving, in the evening.

In 1828, Candlish was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Glasgow, and in that same year he became assistant minister to Dr. Gavin Gibb in St. Andrew's Church, Glasgow. In 1831, Dr. Gibb died, and Candlish's assistantship terminated. Following this, Candlish was offered the post as assistant to Professor Walker in teaching Latin at Glasgow, but he declined the offer, preferring to accept a position as assistant to Mr. Gregor, minister at Bonhill, Vale of Leven, where he spent two years and three months.

1 - Memorials of R.S. Candlish - W. Wilson, D.D. Adam & Charles Black: Edinburgh: 1880 - See also: Life of Principal Candlish - Jean L. Watson. Both these volumes are mediocre and the field is still open even at this late date for a good biography of R.S. Candlish. - See also an unpublished doctoral thesis (Edinburgh) by John P. Lee - Dr. R.S. Candlish as Preacher & Theologian

2 - See: The Gospel of Forgiveness - p. 253 and The Disruption Testimony & Its Bearing on Present Duty - p. 18

For a time it looked as if Candlish was not to receive a call, and he became so discouraged that he contemplated offering himself for service in Canada. However, in 1834, Candlish was invited to become the assistant to Mr. Martin, minister of St. George's Church, Edinburgh. Shortly after accepting this position, Mr. Martin died, and in spite of some opposition (notably from Dr. William Cunningham) Candlish was inducted as minister to the charge of St. George's Church, Edinburgh. Candlish's fame as an expositor¹ of the Scriptures spread rapidly, and his services as a lecturer and preacher were in great demand.

Candlish became equally well-known as an orator and Churchman, and was regarded by his colleagues as second only to the great Dr. Chalmers himself.

In 1840, Candlish was proposed for the Chair of Biblical Criticism which he personally felt would have been congenial to him, but the appointment to the Chair was cancelled because of Candlish's implication in the Strathbogie affair.

In 1861, Candlish was called by the Free Church to occupy the chair in the General Assembly, and in the following year, he was honoured by being appointed to the office of the Principalship of the New College in place of Dr. William Cunningham.

In 1864, when the Cunningham Lectureship was established, Principal Candlish was invited to be the first lecturer. He took as his subject: The Fatherhood of God, and his lectures which were subsequently published caused a good deal of comment and criticism in his own and other Churches.

1 - Memorials of R.S. Candlish - W. Wilson - p. 603, See the first sentence of the last paragraph.

Considering the magnitude of his other duties, Candlish managed to write a good many books, articles, and pamphlets. Among his most enduring theological works, the following may be mentioned: The Fatherhood of God, On The Sonship and Brotherhood of Believers, The First Epistle of John, Life in a Risen Saviour, Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays, The Atonement: Its Reality, Completeness and Extent, The Book of Genesis (Two Volumes)

Candlish died on October 19th in the year 1873.

In his day, Candlish had a reputation second to none as both a preacher and a Churchman. To a much lesser extent he was also recognized as a theologian. While the passing of the years has not, and is not likely to diminish his reputation as preacher and Churchman, it is the contention of the writer of this thesis that a careful reading and re-reading of Candlish's theological works will reveal a theological mind in advance of its time, a mind that saw clearly that the Incarnation must be properly related to the Atonement if we are to present a whole gospel to a whole world. Candlish was very sure that any attempt to build a theology on either the Incarnation or the Atonement could only result in a one-sided fragmentary presentation of the Gospel. Candlish sought to avoid this pitfall, and in his theology he has much to teach us today who are confronted again with the problem of how are we to properly relate the Incarnation and Atonement?

In seeking to ascertain the major influences in Candlish's theological writings, we are immediately confronted with the problem that Candlish doesn't say very much about the men and books that exercised the greatest influence in his thinking. Even allowing for the fact that Candlish was writing approximately a hundred years ago when footnotes and bibliographies were not standard apparatus in theological works, his references to writers and

theological works are meagre in the extreme. Of course it must also be remembered that most of Candlish's writings of a theological nature were expository studies where it is not nearly so important to document one's sources in the same way as one would in a more technical theological treatise. Anyhow, Candlish does not provide us with many clues as to the sources of his theological thought, though he does mention a few names and a few books which appear to have influenced him a great deal. Mention has already been made of the fact that Candlish found his theological course of studies at the Divinity Hall quite unsatisfactory. However, while he was a student he read some books which had a profound and lasting effect on his theological thinking. Easily the most important of these books was: An Inquiry into the Doctrine of the Eternal Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ, written by the Rev. Richard Treffry, Junior. This book, which was written in opposition to the views of Dr. Adam Clarke who belonged to the same Wesleyan Communion as did Treffry, and Dr. Moses Stuart of Andover in the United States, developed the thought that the origin of Christ's Sonship is to be found not in any incident or event of time, but in the Son's eternal relation to the Father within the Godhead. The reading of this book of Treffry's not only influenced Candlish's thinking on the Eternal Sonship of Christ, it also helped to determine his future theological interests. In his Introduction to Dr. James Kidd's book, A Dissertation on the Eternal Sonship of Christ, Candlish writes,

"The reading of Treffry's book started my thoughts in the line which they have since followed."¹

The influence of Treffry's book can be plainly seen in such books as Candlish's, the Fatherhood of God, On the Sonship and Brotherhood of Believers, and perhaps, above all in his, The First Epistle of John.

1 - A Dissertation on the Eternal Sonship of Christ - James Kidd, Hamilton, Adams, & Co. London: 1872. p. vii

To a lesser extent, Candlish was also influenced in his thinking on the Eternal Sonship of Christ and the Incarnation, by James Kidd's book, mentioned above, to which Candlish contributed a biographical and theological introduction.

Woven into the very fabric of Candlish's writings is the theology of John Calvin whom he greatly admired and whom he often quotes in his works.

Candlish proclaims his debt to Principal Hill of St. Andrews's for his understanding of the Atonement. In his book entitled: The Atonement: Its Reality, Completeness, and Extent, Candlish quotes approvingly Principal Hill's "discussion of the Atonement" in his Lectures, Book iv, Chapter 3, which is then followed by a long quotation from Hill's work on the atonement, which may be regarded as a summary of Candlish's own views.

Candlish was obviously also very greatly indebted to Irenaeus; especially is he influenced by Irenaeus' exposition of Christ as the *ἀνκεφαλῶς* the Great Head of the Race. It is not always clear whether Candlish has gone direct to Irenaeus himself, or whether his knowledge of Irenaeus' theology comes to him via Calvin and/or Treffry. This is a problem that will have to be investigated in this thesis.

To a lesser extent, Candlish was influenced by Jonathan Edwards and John Owen, with whose works he appears to have been quite familiar. As we shall see later, Candlish disagrees quite radically with John Owen on the subject of Christ's Sonship and that of the believer through adoption. Finally, one gets the feeling in reading Candlish, especially on the atonement, that in spite of the fact that he appears to stand unmovedly and unashamedly for Limited Atonement, nevertheless he has been greatly influenced by the Marrow theology in his understanding of the full proclamation of a free gospel to all of mankind sinners without exception. Treffry, Calvin, Irenaeus, and Principal Hill - these then appear to be the main influences in Candlish's

life that have helped to shape his theological thinking about the Incarnation and the Atonement.

Robert Smith Candlish was, by conviction, a disciple of the Reformed Theology as set forth by John Calvin and interpreted by the Westminster Standards. As Robert Rainy says in his essay on Candlish as Theologian,

"he frankly adopted the essential positions of the Reformed Theology."¹

Indeed, Candlish's sermons and other theological works, are, in the main, expositions of a Biblical Theology as understood from a Reformed point of view. Speaking of Candlish's book on: Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays, Rainy says,

"Dr. Candlish maintained the richness and compass of that theology, as much as its undeniable strength and precision. His "Examination" glows all through with the consciousness of wealth and resource. For him the Reformed Theology is no mere assertion of rights and compensations; it is the scheme of a rich and wonderful revelation of God, and of a worthy and majestic dealing with man"²

In asserting that Dr. Candlish was a Reformed Theologian through and through by reason of profound convictions held tenaciously, it must not be assumed that he was a slavish adherent to everything that was said or taught in the name of Reformed Theology. Dr. Candlish could be, and often was, critical of Reformed theologians and Reformed thought. Rainy stresses this point when he says:

"By conviction a disciple of the Reformed Theology, in so far as he agreed with its positive teaching, he was far from accepting a merely stationary or a merely traditional version of theology."³

This attitude of Candlish's is reflected in his thinking concerning the juridical element which was so prominent in Reformed Theology. As nearly

1 - Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish, D.D. - W. Wilson Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black: 1880. p. 610

2 - W. Wilson - op. cit. - p. 613

3 - W. Wilson - op. cit. - p. 622

all his theological works show, Candlish believed that the juridical aspect in Reformed Theology was of crucial importance. However, he had also come to the conclusion - a conclusion stated in many of his volumes¹ - that the juridical or forensic element was being given far too prominent a place in the Reformed Theology, and again and again he registered a protest against this practice.

"... Dr. Candlish defended with the fullest conviction the juridical elements in the Reformed Theology ... but he believed that other elements required like justice from the theologians; and he was disposed to believe that many teachers had dwelt too exclusively on the forensic relation, as the basis on which, and the form within which, Christian benefits accrue to men."²

As we shall see later in our study, Candlish felt very strongly that this over-emphasis on the forensic relation in Reformed Theology had done irreparable harm to a proper understanding of Justification, and perhaps more important still, had prevented Reformed Theology from developing a truly Biblical notion of Adoption. On the subject of Adoption, Candlish was disposed to bring the weight of his criticisms to bear against the whole of Protestant theology. In his lectures on: The Fatherhood of God, he says,

"I venture a critical observation on the theology of the Reformation. In that theology the subject of adoption, or the sonship of Christ's disciples, did not, as it seems to me, occupy the place and receive the prominence to which it is on scriptural grounds entitled."

Then he proceeds,

"The creeds and confessions of the Protestant and Reformed Churches, as well as the theological systems of their colleges, are for the most part extremely meagre and defective in what they say on the subject."³

1 - See, e.g. The Fatherhood of God and On the Sonship and Brotherhood of Believers

2 - W. Wilson - op. cit. pp. 614-615

3 - The Fatherhood of God - 5th Edition - R.S. Candlish Edinburgh:
Adam & Charles Black: 1870 p. 192-193

Candlish also criticizes the subordinate standards of the Church:

"Take our own books for instance, our Confession and Catechisms. I never have had any scruple to affirm that their statements on the subject of adoption are by no means satisfactory ... The answer in the Shorter Catechism is really, in substance, scarcely anything more than that adoption is adoption."¹

However, as a Calvinistic theologian who was committed to a system of theology that he felt, in the main, was sound because it was scriptural, Dr. Candlish is much more at home as a defender of the faith rather than a critic of the faith. And he certainly appeared often in this role as a great defender of the Reformed Theology, consequently many of his theological works assume the character of a polemic, especially when he comes into collision with what was popularly spoken of in his day as the Broad School of Theology.

In order to understand fully Dr. Candlish as a defender of the faith, and indeed, in order properly to understand his theological position, it is necessary now to take a quick look at Candlish's theological skirmishes with the adherents of the Broad School of Theology.

The Broad School of Theology, as represented by men like F.D. Maurice, attacked the Reformed Theology, especially that theology in its juridical aspect. For Maurice and the Broad School, God was regarded as a loving and paternal Father of all men. That God was a righteous Judge, that God dealt with His creatures in a judicial manner, was something that was heartily repudiated by Maurice and his followers. Such an attitude, if correct, and if permitted to go unchallenged, might easily have dealt a crippling blow to the cause of Reformed Theology. At this point, Dr. Candlish entered the arena on behalf of the Reformed Theology. Candlish knew that:

1 - R.S. Candlish - op. cit. - p. 194

"This juridical element, this regulative influence of Law, is the dogma-building element in the most characteristic parts of the Reformed Theology, its anthropology and soteriology."¹

Candlish therefore took up the cudgels on behalf of Reformed Theology, especially in his book: Examination of Maurice's Theological Essays. Here in this book, Candlish goes straight to the heart of the controversy between the Broad School and the Reformed Theology, namely the fact of the juridical ideas expounded by Reformed Theology. In his book, Candlish undertook to expose the

"biblical and the theological weakness of the positions taken up by his opponent. The book has naturally ceased to be read, because the age has moved away from that precise stage of the controversy. It is well worth reading, however, as a specimen of the spirit in which the Reformed Theology may be conceived and vindicated."²

There can be no question about it that Candlish ably set forth the Biblical character of the Reformed Theology as well as the unbiblical conclusions of his opponents in a manner that certainly vindicated the Reformed Theology. Candlish has sometimes been accused of taking unfair advantage of Maurice and his Broad School opponents by seizing on weak points in their expositions, and indeed of caricaturing the theological positions of his opponents. The charge is manifestly untrue. It is true that Candlish exposed the Broad School theology to a searching analysis, even of what appeared to be minute and unimportant points, but in all this Candlish was merely seeking to leave no stone unturned in his endeavour to show that the teachings of the Broad School in their broad outlines and also in their more detailed exposition, were false because they were not founded on the

1 - W. Wilson - op. cit. - p. 611

2 - Op. cit. - pp. 612-613

testimony of Holy Scripture, as was indeed the Reformed Theology which he sought to defend and vindicate also at the bar of Scripture.

In Candlish's day, Scottish Theology was very greatly influenced by what is known as the Federal Scheme of Theology. This scheme of theology had been in existence in one form or another for many years in Scotland. Indeed the earliest monograph on the subject of Federal Theology is dated 1596 and is by Robert Rollock whose dates are 1555-1598. Some of the most illustrious names in Scottish Theology were influenced by Federal Theology, men like David Dickson, Samuel Rutherford, and Thomas Boston. The Federal Scheme of theology is also implicitly taught in the Westminster Standards of the Church, and it is set forth most explicitly in The Sum of Saving Knowledge, which, while not an official document of the Scottish Church, nevertheless exerted a profound influence in the life and teaching of the Church.

Candlish, like most of the theologians of his day, was also influenced to a more or less degree by the Federal Scheme of Theology. In his commentary on: The Book of Genesis, he makes the following references to Federal Theology:

"The gracious covenant, into which at first when all seemed lost, he admitted Adam as a partaker, he will now again ... establish with Noah. And with excellent reason. For it is neither with Adam, nor with Noah, that the covenant is made .. But the covenant is made with His own beloved Son; and with Adam and Noah only in Him."¹

"Let us bear in mind that the covenant of grace is not a voluntary compact or agreement between God and us, implying or requiring the consent councils of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. But in its relation to us, it is simply the solemn act of God binding himself to us, and binding us to himself."²

1 - The Book of Genesis - New Edition - R.S. Candlish Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black: 1868 - pp. 129-130

2 - R.S. Candlish - op. cit. - p. 368

Again in his volume on the Atonement, Candlish writes:

"We are accustomed to believe that in the covenant transaction between the Father and the Son, an elect people being given to Christ, he did in their room, and as their surety, undertake to accomplish a work, which ... insured infallibly their complete salvation."¹

What then was the distinctive teaching of the Federal Scheme of Theology?

Here is how W. Adams Brown summarizes it in his article on Covenant Theology:

"According to this scheme, God at the Creation entered into an agreement with Adam as the federal head of the race, promising to him and to his descendants eternal life on condition of his obedience to the Divine command, that he should not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and threatening him with eternal death for himself and his descendants in case of his disobedience. Adam having failed to stand the test, God entered into a second agreement with Christ as the Second Adam, on behalf of the elect, promising them forgiveness and eternal life in consideration of Christ's perfect obedience and satisfaction imputed to them by faith, as well as all the gifts and graces which are necessary to the realization of this supreme blessing in experience ... the problem which it was designed to solve ... was, in a word, the reconciliation of the sovereignty of God with man's assurance of salvation."²

T.M. Lindsay, in another article, has this to say:

"It is a system of theology which attempts to bring the whole scheme of theological thought under the ruling idea of ... covenants, and which explains the plan of salvation by an antithesis between the two covenants. The differentia of Federalism consists (1) in the ruling place given to the idea of covenant, and (2) in the peculiar relation which the one covenant bears to the other."³

Originally, Federalism appears to have worked with the idea of two covenants, a covenant of works and a covenant of grace. Later, however, this was expanded into three covenants: a covenant of works, a covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son, and a covenant of grace. This latter scheme was made popular by its exposition in the Sum of Saving Knowledge.

1 - The Atonement: Its Reality, Completeness and Extent - By R.S. Candlish
Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black: 1873 - p. 230

2 - Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics - Volume 4. Article on Covenant Theology - W. Adams Brown - pp. 216-217

3 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - Vol. xxviii, 1879 The Covenant Theology - T.M. Lindsay - p. 223

In the Federal Scheme

"the only true and proper use of the term covenant ... is its use to denote "a mutual agreement between parties with respect to something." It is very important not to lose sight of this definition, for the whole of the covenant theology rests upon it ... in the Covenant Theology the covenant is a contract, a bargain, a mutual agreement between parties with respect to something; and this way of defining the main idea colours the whole system."¹

From these references, it will be plain that there are some really radical differences between the teaching of Reformed Theology regarding God, grace, and the covenant, and that of Federal Theology. It has sometimes been claimed that Federal Theology has its origins in the theology of the Reformation, but this is an assertion that cannot be substantiated. To be sure, Reformed Theology stresses, as does Scripture itself, the fact of the covenant in both the new and old forms, but unlike Federal Theology, Reformed Theology never sought to break up the covenants into works, redemption, and grace. For Reformed Theology, there is but one covenant, indivisible, though renewed by the death of the Redeemer.

Again, Reformed Theology never defined the covenant in such legalistic fashion as did the Federal theologians. God is a gracious God in Reformed Theology and all His actions towards men flow from His sheer unmerited grace; all thought of God as a "contract" God is foreign to both Reformed Theology and the Scriptures.

As has been already said, Candlish was influenced by the Federal theology, and in a limited sense, it could be said that he worked from within the framework of a Federal Theology. And when we realize that the Federal Scheme of Theology had precious little to say about the Incarnation, and even less to say about the relation of the Incarnation to the Atonement, we see how Candlish

1 - T.M. Lindsay - op. cit. - pp. 524-525

was working within a framework that made it difficult indeed to work out an adequate Christology that could set forth these two great doctrines in a proper relation to one another. At best Federal Theology regarded the Incarnation as instrumental - as a necessary means whereby Christ could come and die for the elect whom the Father had chosen before the foundation of the world. Federalism stressed the fact of a Limited Atonement thus advocating a Christology that was bound up with an abstract view of the sovereignty of God and the Divine Decrees.

Yet in spite of the handicap of being bound hand and foot by the fetters of a Federal Scheme of Theology, Candlish was able, largely by his study of the Scriptures, to snap the chains that bound him, and work out a Christology in which the relation of the Incarnation to the Atonement is set forth clearly.

Here, Candlish might well be compared with another theologian of an earlier era,¹ who, also standing in the tradition of the Federal Scheme, yet somehow managed to snap his theological bonds and be freed from the rigid Federal system, enabling him to proclaim in a fresh way the gospel of free grace in terms of the believer's union with his crucified, risen, and exalted Lord.

1 - See: Church of Scotland Report on Baptism - T.F. Torrance Convener - p. 14 of the 1959 Report.

CHAPTER II

The Incarnation and the Sonship of Christ

a) Candlish's Doctrine of the Trinity

An important emphasis, that becomes increasingly apparent with the reading and re-reading of Candlish's works, is his persistent emphasis on the Trinity. No matter what doctrine he is considering, be it The Incarnation, the Atonement, Justification by Faith, The Resurrection, or Regeneration, Candlish is always careful to give to each of the Three Persons in the Godhead, his place. Thus in a real sense, we ought to say that Candlish's theology is not just Christological - and it is that - it is also very decidedly Trinitarian. A few random examples that could be multiplied endlessly, chosen from his works, will help illustrate this point. Thus in one of his commentaries he writes:

"... this sealing work of the Holy Spirit of God is a great reality, within the range and sphere of your own spiritual consciousness, and that it is a real and living divine person who is carrying it on. Nay, more than that, the three persons in the Godhead are all severally concerned..."¹

In another book he says:

"All things are yours when you are of God in Christ Jesus, and he is made of God to you redemption. Peace with God is yours; assurance of God's love is yours; the earnest of the Spirit is yours; adoption into the family of heaven is yours;....."²

Or again, Candlish writes:

"In the Son the Father gives grace and glory; only in the Son; only to those who are one with the Son, as the Son is one with the Father. A oneness such as that, - who may effect but only the blessed Spirit who is himself one with the Father and the Son."³

1 - Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians - R.S. Candlish
Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black: 1975 - p.190

2 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - R.S. Candlish
Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black: 1878 - p.319

3 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - R.S. Candlish
Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black: 1872 - p.74

In a pamphlet, Candlish stresses the Trinity as follows:

"What seed is to be heir must be determined and fixed; and it can be fixed only by a decree of election....the Father having from everlasting appointed or elected....the seed that is to be heir..... the Son has from everlasting an interest in the promise..He is the one seedThe Holy Spirit...is a party to it."¹

In all of Candlish's theological works there are copious examples of his Trinitarian emphasis on doctrine woven into the very fabric of his theology. In his Cunningham Lectures, before he proceeds to discuss: The Fatherhood of God, as Manifested in the Person of Christ, the Incarnate Word, he prefaces the chapter with a section on the: Doctrine of the Trinity, in which he expounds briefly the Trinity as the essential context for understanding the Fatherhood of God as revealed in and through the Incarnation. Again, we note how Candlish's Trinitarian emphasis peeps through in his quarrel with the Broad School of Theology, especially in his quarrel with F.D.Maurice. In his polemical work in which he examines Maurice's theology carefully, Candlish devotes a fairly lengthy chapter to: On the Trinity in Unity. In this chapter he criticizes Maurice for wishing to retain the distinction of Persons within the Trinity but not the distinction of offices.

"Let me own my own need",

says Candlish,

"of distinct offices of redeeming love being performed towards me, such as only divine Persons can perform...there are Divine Persons to discharge the offices my miserable case demands; that there is a Son, who, taking my place as a criminal, fulfilling the righteousness and enduring the condemnation of the law in my stead, invests me with a right to take his place, along with himself, in the house and heart of

1 - Grace and Faith (A Pamphlet) or The Promise Sure to All the Seed by Grace Through Faith - R.S. Candlish
Edinburgh: John MacLaren: 1866 - pp.8-9.

his Father, where He is ever representing me; that there is a Spirit who can reach and touch the spring of thought and action in me, and renovate my will; that the Father - sending in infinite love the infinite Son, the loving Spirit, - receives me, acquits me, adopts me, loves me as his son, and makes me heir of all things. To know this.....is to have life in the highest sense..To act upon that knowledge...is to have access through the Son, by the Spirit, to the Father."¹

Candlish denied what Maurice appears to believe, namely, that one can hold to a real distinction of the Three Persons in the Trinity without at the same time holding to a distinction of offices among the Three Persons. About Maurice's theory of the Trinity, Candlish has this to say:

"On any theory which, however it may accommodate itself to orthodox and evangelical phraseology, does in fact reduce the whole process of man's redemption, regeneration, and salvation, to one of discovery, illumination, revelation, inspiration, - or whatever word may be used to denote a man's being brought to see and apprehend what he already is, - it seems extremely difficult to guard against this doctrine of the Three Persons in the Trinity, becoming, after all, nominal rather than real."²

For Candlish, however, the doctrine of the Trinity was not simply a matter for argumentation or speculation. It was above all, a doctrine revealed in the testimony of Scripture that had immense practical value. Basically, Candlish regarded the Trinity as follows:

"Of course, and beyond all question, the doctrine of the Trinity is a doctrine of revelation. It is a revealed fact, not discoverable by human reason - resting for its evidence on divine testimony."³

But it was the practical side of the doctrine of the Trinity that Candlish stressed in his writings. The doctrine of the One Eternal Sonship of Christ on which so much of Candlish's theology depends, can only be understood in terms

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- 1 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1855,
Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays Examined by R.S. Candlish - a Review. p.231
 - 2 - Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays - R.S.Candlish
London: James Nisbet & Co.: 1854 - p.433
 - 3 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - p.328

of the doctrine of the Three Persons in the One Godhead, a fact he never tires of repeating.¹ But undoubtedly the doctrine which Candlish associates most with the fact of the Trinity is the doctrine of the Love of God. Speaking on that fact that 'God is love', he says,

"I confess to having always felt a great difficulty here, which to my mind, the fact or doctrine of the Trinity relieves, at least, if it does not quite remove."²

In one of his commentaries, Candlish explains just how the doctrine of the Trinity helps him to understand the Biblical teaching that 'God is love'.

"God is love." It is a necessity of his nature, it is his very nature to love. He cannot exist without loving. He cannot but love. He is, has ever been, love. From all eternity, from before all worlds, God is love. Love never is, or can be, never was or could be, absent from his being....For this love, which is thus identified with his very being, is not dormant or quiescent merely, in posse, and not in esse. Love in God never is, never has been, like a latent germ, needing outward influences to make it spring up; or like a slumbering power, waiting for occasions to call it forth. If it were so, it could not truly be said that in himself, in his very manner of being, "God is love." It is, it has ever been, active, forthgoing, self-manifesting, self-communicating. It is, has ever been, in exercise. Before creation it is so. In the bosom of the everlasting Father is his eternal, only begotten Son; and with the Father and the Son is the Holy Ghost. So "God is love" before all creation; love in exercise; love not possible merely but actual; love forthgoing and communicative of itself; from the Father the fountain of Deity, to the Son; from the Father and the Son to the Holy Ghost. In creation, this love is seen forthgoing and communicative in a new way towards new objects."³

Or again, we have the same emphasis on the relationship that exists between the fact of the Trinity and the fact that 'God is love,' in his lectures on: The Fatherhood of God.

"So we are to conceive of God as love. "God is love." His being love is not dependent on what may be called the accident or contingency of his

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- 1 - See many passages in: The Fatherhood of God, The First Epistle of John, On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers.
 - 2 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - p.330
 - 3 - The First Epistle of John Expounded in a Series of Lectures - R.S.Candlish - p.386

having creatures to be loved. It springs out of the very necessity of his nature. It is his essential manner of being. Before the existence of any creature - before all time - "God is love;" - not love potentially only, as it were, but love actually; not capable of loving, but loving; he loves and is loved. He is true and very love; not love quiescent, but love active in exercise. Thus from all eternity God is love. And he is so, and can only be so, in virtue of the eternal distinction of the divine persons in the Godhead, and the eternal relations which they sustain towards one another."¹

For Candlish then, the doctrine of the Trinity was fundamental. It permeates all his theological works; it lies at the heart of his whole theological system. Stressing as he did, the fact of the one eternal Sonship of Christ; emphasizing as was his wont, the fact that "God is love," it is not difficult to see why it is, that the doctrine of the Trinity plays such a prominent role in the theology of R.S.Candlish. All throughout our study, we shall see that whatever doctrine of Candlish's we may be studying, the fact of the Trinity will have a bearing on how he expounds that doctrine. This is especially true in the great work of redemption accomplished on behalf of man by Jesus Christ. For though the Person of Christ may be central in Candlish's work of redemption and its application thereof, yet he never forgets that it is really the work of the Triune God, each with his own particular role to play. Redemption is the work of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

1 - The Fatherhood of God - op. cit. - pp.35-36

b) The One Eternal Sonship of Christ

Before proceeding to examine Candlish's main emphasis in this section on The Incarnation and the Sonship of Christ - that the One Eternal Sonship of Christ is revealed in and through the Incarnation - we must first note Candlish's teaching on the fact of Christ's Sonship. The fact of the One Eternal Sonship of Christ is absolutely crucial for Candlish. Indeed, Robert Rainy is able to say, speaking of

"this Sonship... which immutably obtains between the Father and the Eternal Word,"

that,

" Dr. Candlish accordingly deduced his whole chain of thought from this high source."¹

The truth is, that Candlish's teaching about the Sonship of Christ as revealed through the Incarnation; and Candlish's teaching that the believer's sonship rests only on the Sonship of Christ, is grounded in the prior truth, that primarily and originally there was but One Sonship - Christ's Eternal Sonship.

On this whole question of theological sonship, Candlish was greatly influenced by a number of men. Of these men, by far the greatest influence so far as sonship is concerned, appears to be that of Treffry in his book: An Inquiry into the Doctrine of the Eternal Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ. In innumerable passages, Candlish speaks of his indebtedness to Treffry's treatise on the subject.² Another man whose name is often linked with that of Treffry, and who deepened Candlish's understanding of the whole question of sonship, is that of Dr. James Kidd of Aberdeen. Candlish thought so highly of Kidd that he wrote an introduction to his book.³

1 - Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish - op.cit. p.621

2 - See, e.g. p.vll of Kidd's Book and p.38 of: The Fatherhood of God.

3 - A Dissertation on the Eternal Sonship of Christ - James Kidd.
London: Hamilton & Adams & Co.: 1872 (A New Edition)

In this matter of sonship, Candlish was also influenced by John Calvin as evidenced by his quotation from the Institutes of the Christian Religion (2:14:5) on the flyleaf of The Fatherhood of God. This influence is also noted by the reviewer of Candlish's Cunningham Lectures in the British and Foreign Evangelical Review, 1865, in which the reviewer claims that Candlish was not only influenced by Calvin, but that his doctrine of sonship is but an expansion of Calvin's own teaching on the subject.¹

The influence of the Puritan writer, John Owen is acknowledged by Candlish in a fairly lengthy quotation from Owen's works, together with this comment:

"I claim Owen on my side."²

Candlish also claims theological kinship with Thomas Goodwin in the doctrine of the sonship of Christ and quotes liberally from Goodwin's works. Finally, Candlish acknowledges his indebtedness to Jonathan Edwards regarding the doctrine under discussion.³

With the help of the above-mentioned sources, together with the witness of the ancient Creeds, and above all with the testimony of Holy Scripture before him, Candlish stood firm on the fact of the One Eternal Sonship of Christ as a relation that has existed between the Father and the Son from all eternity. And so he can say:

"It is not my purpose to enter at any length into the proof of the eternal sonship of the Second Person in the Trinity - involving, as it necessarily does, the eternal fatherhood of the First. I rather assume the fact or doctrine, as plainly taught in Scripture, and, with scarcely an exception of any note, universally admitted by all believers in our Lord's supreme divinity, in all ages of the Church. But as I consider this eternal relation of fatherhood and sonship in the Godhead to be the

1 - See esp.pp.725-6 of the above-mentioned magazine

2 - The Fatherhood of God - op.cit. p.xxxv

3 - See the flyleaf of: The Fatherhood of God

real origin, root, and ground, as well as the archetype, prototype, and model of the relation of fatherhood and sonship between God and any of his creatures, it may be proper to bring out briefly, though with great prominence, what is usually held to be the import of this glorious truth."¹

For a brief summary of Candlish's beliefs regarding the One Eternal Sonship, we may profitably turn to another of his writings, where he says:

"It is essential to the very being of the Supreme that he should be a Father, and that of him there should be a Son. From all eternity, accordingly, - in the terms of the Creed of the Council of Nice, - the Son is of the Father; "begotten of his Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God." He is "the everlasting Son of the Father," "begotten, not made." The relation therefore of paternity or fatherhood in God preceded creation, as well as redemption; and is indeed from everlasting. By the very necessity of his nature; - not by any voluntary act in time, but by the eternal mode of his subsistence, the Highest is everlastingly a Father; and has in his bosom, of his own substance and as his fellow, a Son whom he loves, and with whom, in the communion of the Holy Spirit, he is one. This is what is implied in the doctrine of the eternal and necessary existence of the Son, as distinct from the Father in respect of personality, though one with him in nature and substance; in attributes, works, and ways. It is what is brought out in the descriptions which Scripture gives of the Son's fellowship with the Father from everlasting."²

And in another place Candlish writes:

"Thus, then, the paternal relation, the relation of fatherhood and sonship, exists primarily and originally in the Godhead itself. And, as thus existing, it is natural, necessary, and eternal. It is not constituted by any creative act, or any sovereign volition or fiat of will. The Son is eternally begotten of the Father; "begotten not made;" of the same substance; participating in the same nature.... very God of very God" In this eternal relation between the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is eternally and intimately concerned. Being one with the Father and the Son in the undivided essence of Deity, he is - if one may venture to use such language on such a subject - he is evermore a conscious, consenting party to the relation. It is in the Holy Spirit that this wondrous relation of divine fatherhood and sonship, with all its inconceivable endearments, is realised from all eternity. It is by the Holy Spirit that it is developed, in time. He is the Spirit of God, and of his son (Gal.4:6)."³

1 - The Fatherhood of God - op.cit. - pp.34-35

2 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - op.cit. pp.6-7

3 - The Fatherhood of God - op.Cit. - pp.36-37

These two quotations give, albeit in summary fashion, the heart of the doctrine of the One Eternal Sonship of Christ as held by Candlish. Candlish was well aware that he had never set down fully all his thoughts on this central truth of the Christian Faith; this was not because Candlish had any doubts about where he stood on the doctrine of Christ's Sonship, it was simply because his own understanding and thoughts on the doctrine had been so well expressed in other orthodox, evangelical works on the subject.¹ Indeed he writes in one place:

"Thus far I have adverted to the original and necessary relation of fatherhood and sonship, as subsisting from everlasting in the Eternal Godhead. For the further investigation of that great subject, I refer inquirers to such works as that of Dr. Kidd, and...the unanswered and unanswerable treatise of Treffrey."²

Notwithstanding then, the brevity of Candlish's own treatment of the Sonship of Christ, it is evident that for him, this doctrine is of absolutely crucial importance. In particular, Candlish appears to stress three things in connection with the One Eternal Sonship of Christ. First, he emphasizes the fact that primarily and originally there was only One Sonship, that of Christ's. Rainy notes this in his essay on Dr. Candlish as Theologian:

"We men, by adoption, and through union to Christ, enter into Sonship, which is His essentially, and which originally is His exclusively alone."³

Candlish himself could say in his "reply to Professor Crawford's strictures,"

"our Redeemer is styled in Scripture the Son of God in virtue of his eternal relation to his heavenly Father."⁴

Second, Candlish stressed the fact that Christ's Sonship has existed from all eternity. Speaking of two theologians who believed otherwise, Candlish wrote:

"...these divines maintained the doctrine of the supreme divinity of our Lord...But they sought the origin of his sonship, not in an

1 - Op. cit. - p.34

2 - Op. cit. - p.38

3 - Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish, D.D. - p.617

4 - The Fatherhood of God - Preliminary Essay: Examination of Professor Crawford's Work on the Fatherhood of God - p.lvi

eternal relation, but in an incident or event of time, his incarnation or his resurrection. It has always been found impossible to keep long to an assertion of our Lord's supreme divinity, apart from his eternal sonship...."¹

Third, Candlish stresses that this One Eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ is the one and only source of the believer's sonship. The last quotation from Rainy's chapter on Candlish made this very point.² Candlish himself never tires of stressing this fact again and again. Here is how he puts it in one place:

"For before all worlds the Son is in the bosom of the Father. And the infinite, ineffable complacency subsisting between the Father and the Son, realised in the unity of the Holy Spirit with them both, is the true prototype and original model or pattern of the fatherly relation and the fatherly affection of which all who are in the Son are partakers, and in virtue of which they call God Father....."³

1 - James Kidd - op.cit. - pp.vii - viii

2 - Op.cit. - p.617

3 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - p.9

c) The One Eternal Sonship is Revealed through the Incarnation

Candlish argued that sonship - sonship which alone is worthy of that exalted name - was originally and primarily only the One Eternal Sonship of Christ Himself. Apart from His Sonship there was originally no such thing as sonship, and the relationship that existed between God and His creatures before the Incarnation, could in no sense be regarded as sonship. Indeed, before sonship could be known by men, it had to be revealed by God to men.

"...sonship in any worthy and definite sense of it.....could arise only by some special association with the true Son, and could be made known only by revelation."¹

Candlish himself writes:

"Assuming the eternity of the relation, I proceed to inquire into the manner in which it is manifested....And here...it may be observed that the development of this relation, its being disclosed and unfolded, is by means of creation, and...so far as we of the human race are concerned, in the one great event of the incarnation. It is the incarnation that illustrates all the preceding, as well as all the subsequent steps in the process of this development of the divine fatherhood and sonship. For it is the incarnation that brings this eternal relation within the range of human cognisance and experience."²

And in his Reply to Professor Crawford, Candlish writes:

"I conceive the relation of the second person of the Godhead to the first to have been much more clearly and specifically revealed than that of the third to either of the other two, because it is a relation into which we are expected to enter. And it is so revealed, in action, by the Son having become incarnate..."³

The reviewer of Candlish's Cunningham Lectures, in his discussion of this question simply says,

"In the first place..the Incarnation presents the Sonship to the whole intelligent universe"⁴

1 - Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish, D.D. - p.618

2 - The Fatherhood of God - Op.cit. - pp. 38-40

3 - The Fatherhood of God - Preliminary Essay: Examination of Professor Crawford's Work on the Fatherhood of God - p.xlix

4 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1865 - p.764

as the keystone of Candlish's teaching.

To reveal that Eternal Sonship, says Candlish, God sent His only-begotten Son into the world. That was not the only reason for the Incarnation. God also sent His Son into the world to manifest his love.

"How? Evidently by his showing that he shared it...God sent his only begotten Son into the world to give us a specimen, an illustration, perhaps the only possible perfect specimen, the only possible perfect illustration of "the love which is of God." None but his only begotten Son could be sent to manifest it; for none but he could feel it...Therefore he is sent to manifest that love."¹

But important as is the revelation of God's love through the Incarnation of His well-beloved Son, there is something even more important for Candlish, something even more fundamental, and it is this: God sent His Son to be the Incarnate Word in order that He might reveal to men that Eternal Sonship, to the end that men might participate in it through union with the Eternal Son. In making this stress, it becomes increasingly apparent that the Incarnation is never regarded by Candlish as being simply instrumental. Christ did not become Incarnate ONLY to die; He came to die, that is the very nerve of the Gospel for Candlish, but He also became "the Word made flesh" in order to reveal to men the One Eternal Sonship existing from all eternity. That Candlish was aware of the temptation of viewing the Incarnation too narrowly, as but an instrument in the plan of redemption, is seen in the following quotation:

"It may be admitted that this fact or doctrine, - the assumption of our nature by the Son of God, - has sometimes been viewed by divines and exhibited by preachers, too much as if it were merely a means to an end, - a step in the work of redemption; and that in consequence of this, its significance and value, considered simply in itself, may have been unintentionally..overlooked."²

1 - The First Epistle of John - Op.cit. - p.382

2 - Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays - p.193

With respect to the fact of the Incarnation, Candlish is at great pains to make clear in page after page, that "the Word made flesh" was a real Incarnation, and not simply a Docetic manifestation. Candlish emphasizes repeatedly the fact of the Deity of Jesus Christ and its importance, but he is none the less anxious to stress and preserve the humanity of the Saviour apart from which there is no salvation. One of the ways in which Candlish does stress the humanity of Christ is by his continual reference to the Virgin Birth of Christ. As we shall see later, the Virgin Birth is of great importance in Candlish's theology for the doctrine of the believer's sonship, but he also stresses this same doctrine in order to lay emphasis upon the fact of the real humanity of the Saviour. Here are a few typical references that could easily be multiplied:

"For the Second Adam is the Living One, "the Lord from heaven."
In him as he becomes incarnate, the spiritual nature, the spiritual life, is not grasped and reached from beneath. He has a body prepared for him in the virgin's womb."¹

In his work on Genesis, he writes:

"in His birth he was shown to be his Holy One and his Son, by his miraculous conception in the virgin's womb..."²

And in another work he speaks of

"..the pure and perfect manhood of the incarnate Son, the Lord Jesus, which he fashioned in the virgin's womb."³

In another discourse, Candlish refers to

"..His supernatural birth by the power of the Holy Ghost....that supernatural birth by which the Son becomes a servant..the Son being transformed into our likeness....the new creation by which the Son becomes partaker of our human nature..."⁴

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- 1 - Life in a Risen Saviour - R.S.Candlish - p.198
Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black: 1858
 - 2 - The Book of Genesis, Vol.I - Op.cit. - p.283
 - 3 - The Unity of the Spirit: The Bond of Peace - By
R.S. Candlish - p.5
 - 4 - The Two Great Commandments: Illustrated in a Series of Discourses
on the 12th Chapter of Romans - R.S. Candlish: London: T.Nelson & Sons:
1860. - pp.63-64

It is sometimes asserted today that the Virgin Birth of our Lord preserves the Deity of Christ, and that there is truth in this no one will want to deny; but for Candlish, as indeed for the Fathers and the theologians of the Reformation, the doctrine of the Virgin Birth the rather preserved the humanity of the Saviour.

Candlish's teaching on the Incarnation comes into sharper focus when we compare what he believed with that of F.D.Maurice, whose views on the Incarnation he criticized severely. Maurice taught¹ that redemption was an eternal fact or act and not something achieved only at a definite point in time by the sacrifice of Christ. For Maurice the simple truth was this:

"All men..are eternally redeemed. They are but called on to recognise the fact, accept it, and live in the power of it..."

For Maurice then,

"The incarnation reveals not a fallen world but a redeemed world."²

Against this sort of teaching Candlish vigorously protested. For him, the Incarnation was inextricably bound up with the fact of man's sin. Indeed, though he nowhere expounds the idea, there can be no doubt whatsoever, that the Incarnation would never have taken place apart from the fact of man's sin.³ Here is part of his reply to Maurice:

"..it is not possible in a theological point of view, to isolate the doctrine of the Incarnation. It must be considered in connexion with two other doctrines at least, - the one, the doctrine concerning the nature of man since the Fall, and the other, the doctrine concerning the nature of the undertaking for which the Son of God was born into this world. And in the end it will be found, that when it is so represented as to be consistent both with the belief of fallen man's depravity and guilt, and with the belief of a real vicarious sacrifice of propitiation, - the Incarnation, - the manhood of our blessed Lord, - becomes only the more valuable, and the more universally available for all the purposes of man's life...."⁴

1 - See, e.g. his works: The Doctrine of Sacrifice, p.192, & his Theological Essays, p.126

2 - V.F.Storr - op.cit. - p.344

3 - See Candlish's Reply to Professor Crawford, p.civ. where he makes passing reference to this topic.

4 - Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays - p.194

For Candlish then, the Incarnation is of vital importance, revealing as it does the One Eternal Sonship which men are called to share; but the Incarnation, however, must not be viewed simply in isolation, it must be seen in relation to the atonement and the fact of fallen man's sin, or else both the Incarnation and the Atonement will be seen out of proportion and thereby distorted.

From the fact that the Eternal Sonship is revealed through the Incarnation, Candlish drew certain conclusions, the most important of which is this: The Eternal Sonship is capable of being communicated to humanity. This basic assertion is carefully expanded by Candlish in his Cunningham Lectures.

"In the first place, the incarnation discovers the communicableness of the relation of fatherhood and sonship, as it exists in the Godhead; it proves it to be a relation which may be communicated to a creature, and shared in by a creature. The Incarnation demonstrates, by a plain palpable proof, that this relation is not like an incommunicable property or attribute of Deity, but is something..in which others besides exclusively Divine persons may participate and have fellowship. In point of fact, the incarnation shows this relation actually communicated to humanity, and shared in by humanity, in the person of "the man Christ Jesus." For the man Christ Jesus is the Son of God, in respect of his human nature as well as his divine."¹

And in another place, he says:

"In Christ, we have the divine Son retaining his sonship in his assumed humanity."²

In teaching that "the incarnation shows this relation (of sonship) actually communicated to humanity" Candlish was careful to guard against the accusation that he was really postulating two sonships. In spite of this, Candlish was criticized by many critics quite severely for this very thing, namely, that he taught a double sonship.³

A careful reading of the second chapter of his Cunningham Lectures ought to have

1 - The Fatherhood of God - op.cit. - p.41

2 - The Fatherhood of God - op.cit. - p.47

3 - See e.g. Reply to Professor Crawford, pp.lxx-lxxvi & lxxx-l & Discussions on the Atonement - George Jamieson - p.510-2 Edinburgh: WmBlackwood Sons: 1887

made clear Candlish's position:

"Let it be remembered that, though possessed of two natures, "Jesus Christ come in the flesh" is one person; one individual person, the man Christ Jesus, who is, from and after the incarnation, the Son of God. There are not two sonships belonging to him, but only one...For the relation of sonship, being strictly personal, must be one, as the person is one. There are not, there cannot be, two distinct relations of fatherhood and sonship subsisting between God and the Incarnate Word; the one proper to his divine, the other to his human nature. The sonship of the one person cannot be conceived of as thus divided...by his taking into personal union with himself the nature of the creature man his proper personality is not thereby affected...He continues to be the Son of the Father in the very same sense exactly in which he has been the Son of the Father from everlasting."¹

While insisting on the one sonship, Candlish also affirmed his belief in the Chalcedonian formula regarding the two natures. By insisting on the one sonship he was not

"confounding the two natures in Christ and ascribing to one what can only be predicated of the other...The two natures, being distinct, and continuing to be distinct, may nevertheless, if united in one person, be embraced in one personal relationship. That is what is meant, and all that is meant. And that surely cannot...be said either to derogate from the supreme divinity or to deify the humanity of the Incarnate Son. As God and man, in two distinct natures, he is one person, standing in one personal relation of sonship to the Father."²

And later in the same chapter, Candlish says:

"But while I distinguish the natures, I cannot divide the person. And consequently, I cannot divide the sonship. It is the one Son of God, sustaining but one relation as Son to the Father, who lives and moves before me, in all his earthly history."³

It will be immediately apparent from these quotations that Candlish held to the Chalcedonian formula concerning the two natures of Christ. Together with that, however, he also stressed the fact of the one sonship in the one undivided person of the Incarnate Saviour, Jesus Christ, from which stemmed his con-

1 - The Fatherhood of God - pp. 41-42

2 - The Fatherhood of God - p.43

3 - Op.cit. - p.46

clusions as summed up in the following two quotations:

"From all this it clearly follows, that in the one undivided person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God come in the flesh, humanity enters into that very relation of sonship, which, before his coming in the flesh, he sustains to the Father. From thenceforth fatherhood is a relation in which the Supreme God stands not merely to a divine, but now also to a human being; to one who is as truly man as he is truly God."¹

"Thus I think the fact of the incarnation may be shown to involve this consequence, that the relation of fatherhood and sonship subsisting between the first and second persons in the Godhead is not incommunicable; that it is a relation in which one having a created nature may participate. Undeniably, in point of fact, humanity actually shares in it, in the person of the Son of God, Jesus Christ come in the flesh."²

1 - Op.cit. - pp.42-43

2 - Op.cit. - pp.46-47

d) The Incarnation Gives a New Revelation of the Sonship

Candlish has argued that through the Incarnation the One Eternal Sonship has been revealed for the first time. He has also maintained that the Eternal Sonship has in no way been altered by this method of revelation. Now he proceeds to argue, that notwithstanding the fact that the Sonship remains unchanged through the Incarnation, nevertheless the Incarnation does give a new revelation of the Sonship, for now the Sonship is joined to Subjectship.

"...through our Lord's incarnation and mediation. He takes on Him, with our flesh, the subject state, the liability to service, and the obligation arising out of our transgression and guilt. He unites these with his own unchanging sonship."¹

And be it noted, for Candlish this subjectship is real, being in no way limited by Christ's being the Eternal Son. Indeed, in the person of the Incarnate Word we now have sonship and subjectship not simply co-existing, but perfectly and fully co-ordinated. When the "Word made flesh" assumes the subject state, He

"enters into it, without derogation from his eternal sonship."²

A reviewer of Candlish's Cunningham Lectures has this to say:

"...the Incarnation presents the Sonship to the whole intelligent universe in a new light. Leaving the eternal Sonship in itself wholly unchanged - the reverse of which it were a contradiction to imagine - the incarnation nevertheless gives a wholly new and wonderful revelation of that Sonship. It brings it forth from the light that is inaccessible and full of glory....and discloses it to view committed on the platform of time, and implicated with the movement and history of created interests, as could not, apart from the hypostatic union, have possibly been conceived. Even to the Father, the Sonship now presents a new aspect; for not only does the Son now dwell in the Father's bosom as from eternity, and as, of course, he still dwells, but he is now in a capacity to stand forth....objectively before his Father's throne to receive sovereign, covenanted, official appointment; to receive "commandment" concerning the discharge of official duty;....

1 - Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish, D.D. - p.616

2 - Reply to Professor Crawford - op.cit. - p.xcvi

and to receive the full enjoyment and manifestation of all the glories of his Sonship in reward of his entire official work:..^{"1}

Candlish expresses his mind on this subject as follows:

"Not only does the fact of the incarnation establish the communicableness of this divine relation of sonship to God the Father; it discovers also its entire consistency, when communicated, with another relation - that of subjectship."²

And just what these two relations are and mean, he goes on to explain:

"..the fact of the incarnation...proves, as perhaps nothing else could prove, the possibility of the two relations of sonship and subjectship meeting in one and the same person; - the sonship, let it be specially noted, being the very relation in which the Son stands to the Father from everlasting; and the subjectship, let it also be specially noted, being the very relation in which the creature stands to the Creator, as his lawgiver, ruler, and judge."³

Not only does the Incarnation manifest this new revelation of sonship whereby it is irrevocably joined to subjectship, for Candlish, we could never have known this apart from the Incarnation.

"I do not see how, before the appearance of the Son of God in his incarnate state, the possibility of such a combination, or the manner in which it might be effected could be made clearly manifest; how it could be shown...that the relation of proper sonship, and the relation of real and actual subjectship, might co-exist in one and the same individual person....the two relations being to all appearances, as regards their respective natures and conditions, opposite and contradictory..... to produce or even imagine, a being who should unite and combine, in his own single and individual person, the filial relation, as it has subsisted from all eternity in the uncreated Godhead, and the subject or servant relation, which began to exist when intelligent creatures came upon the stage of the universe. The problem is now seen actually solved by the union of the two natures, the uncreated Godhead and the created manhood, in Jesus Christ as come in the flesh. In virtue of the one nature, he is the Son; in virtue of the other nature, he is a subject and a servant. And being one person, combining in himself both natures, he is at once both son and subject; - both son and servant."⁴

1 - British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1865 - p.764

2 - The Fatherhood of God - p.49

3 - The Fatherhood of God - p. 54

4 - The Fatherhood of God - pp.49-50

In the Incarnation Sonship is now joined to subjectship in the one undivided Person of Jesus Christ. And for Candlish, let it be said, this juxtaposition of sonship and subjectship revealed only in the "Word made flesh" constitutes the abiding wonder of the Incarnation, even moreso than the union of the two natures.

"This...I cannot but think, is the special wonder and the peculiar mystery of the incarnation. Even more, I would almost say, than in the union of the two natures in one person - the wonder, the mystery lies in the union of the two relations."¹

A few paragraphs later, Candlish writes:

"..that he should himself, continuing to be the Son of the Father, come to stand, in his own person, in the relation of a subject and servant to the Father - this well might be held to be all but inconceivable beforehand. But it is not inconceivable now. The incarnation has made it palpable as a great accomplished fact. And it is a fact pregnant with great results. His coming in the flesh demonstrates that it is possible for him, who is naturally the Son, to be also a subject and a servant, as all God's reasonable creatures are."²

Candlish's teaching on the fact and union of the two relations as revealed by the Incarnation was subject to a good deal of criticism from many quarters as Rainy has pointed out.³ Unquestionably the most redoubtable of all his critics was Professor T.J.Crawford, who sought to refute much of Candlish's teaching regarding sonship - especially Candlish's teaching regarding the union of the two relations - in his notable book: The Fatherhood of God. Among other things, the Church of Scotland professor accused Candlish in his doctrine of the two relations, of teaching, by inference, the deification of His humanity. In his Reply to Professor Crawford, Candlish repudiates this accusation when he says:

"Nor in this do I "suppose the humanity to have been deified by the actual communication to it of those properties or relations which are proper to the divinity....Jesus sustaining in his one person the

1 - The Fatherhood of God - p.50

2 - The Fatherhood of God - p.51

3 - Op.cit. - pp.618-619



one relationship of sonship to the Father, which is his from everlasting, sustains it now as possessed of two natures. That is what I hold to be the position which our Redeemer occupies.....if we understand by the sonship of Christ that relation as it exists in the Godhead, he is assuredly Son, in virtue of his divine nature; while he is no less evidently a subject, in virtue of his human nature."..I admit that, in so far as the ground of these relations is concerned, but not so as to divide the personality and make him son in one of the natures and servant in the other. I hold...that the one person, Jesus Christ, being both God and man, is as to his entire personality both son and servant, and that this is involved in the fact of the incarnation, as it is also requisite for his doing the work for which he became incarnate."¹

Candlish maintained that Professor Crawford's criticisms were based on the failure to distinguish properly between "qualities" and "relations".

"Dr. Crawford still speaks as if "qualities and relations" were in the same category; or as if sonship were an attribute pertaining to one of the two distinct natures, and not a relation sustained by the one individual person."²

The reviewer of the Cunningham Lectures put his finger on the trouble with Crawford's criticism when he said

"What is this but a repetition of that singular confusion of thought..the confounding between an essence of nature and a relation."³

For Candlish the matter resolved itself thus: While the two relations were quite distinct, as were the two natures, nevertheless they were combined in the one person of Christ. He emphasizes the need to recognize that the two relations are distinct:

"Much importance..is to be attached to the keeping of the two relations which meet in the person of Christ apart and distinct.... The person is one, though the relations are to be regarded as distinct, even as the natures are distinct. The Son in the bosom of the Father, and the subject or servant learning obedience by suffering, is one and the same person. The Son is the suffering and obedient servant. The suffering and obedient servant is the Son."⁴

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- 1 - Reply to Professor Crawford - op.cit. - pp.lxii-lxiii
 - 2 - Op.cit. - p.lxxx
 - 3 - British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1865 - p.760
 - 4 - The Fatherhood of God - pp.54-55

On the other hand, he could say:

"In the person of Christ, the two relations, while continuing distinct from one another, are yet found combined."¹

Thus he was able to confess that he found himself

"at a loss to see how either of these relations can be fairly held to interfere with the other. They met and were harmonised in the person of the man Christ Jesus."²

For Candlish, the crowning glory of the Incarnation was not just the fact that God had freely chosen to reveal the One Eternal Sonship through "the Word made flesh", but that in doing so, He irrevocably joined that Eternal and blessed Sonship with the state of the creature - with the state of subjectship.

1 - Op.cit. - p.49

2 - Reply to Professor Crawford - p.ci

e) In the Incarnation, Sonship is now Enjoyed by Christ in His Human Nature under Ordinary Conditions.

Now that Christ as "the Word made flesh" has assumed our subject state for ever; now that "The

"The Son of God, in his incarnation, becomes one of us men, one with us men",¹

it now follows, according to Candlish, that the One Eternal unchangeable Sonship is now enjoyed by Christ in His human nature under ordinary human conditions. This is a corollary that immediately follow if we take seriously the fact of Christ's real humanity, if we regard His coming as a real Incarnation.

Candlish was acutely aware of the tendency - especially among Evangelical theologians - to exalt the Deity of Christ at the expense of His true humanity; consequently, in his writings, he is constantly laying stress upon the fact of the Saviour's real humanity even as did the writer of the First Epistle of John. Commenting on the opening verses of that same epistle, he has this to say:

"He who liveth with the Father evermore, dwelling in his bosom, is manifesting to us in himself - in his manhood, in his feelings, sayings, doings, sufferings, as a man dwelling among us..."²

And in a volume of sermons, he writes:

"And it was this manhood, this characteristic and noble manhood, with its tears, and groans, and sighs, its joys also, its kindnesses, its sympathies, its loves, that the Son of God welded..into his own essential Godhead when he the eternal Word became flesh..."³

This tendency to neglect the real humanity of Jesus Christ was particularly evident in the way men regarded the Son's experience and enjoyment of His sonship in His incarnate state. So often His life of obedient Sonship was thought of almost wholly in terms of His Deity to the almost complete neglect of His humanity, as if His experience and enjoyment of the Sonship depended solely upon

1 - The Fatherhood of God - op.cit. - p.55

2 - The First Epistle of John - op.cit. - p.4.

3 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - op.cit. - pp.272-273

His divine nature and not also upon the real humanity. Such a view, of course, virtually means a denial of a real incarnation, failing as it does to see that in the Incarnation, Christ's experience and enjoyment of His Sonship is in terms also of His human nature and under ordinary conditions. As one critic of Candlish has noted:

"...if the Incarnation teaches anything concerning this glorious and ever-blessed relation, it teaches that it is capable of being embraced in a thoroughly, and intensely human consciousness; of being apprehended and understood by a human intellect; of having its obligations imposed upon, and accepted by, a human conscience and a human will....The eternal Sonship is thus seen to be enjoyed in the human nature of our Lord under limits and conditions, as, of course, also it must be, if enjoyed by his people in communion with him."¹

Candlish was well aware, as evidenced by his writings, of the temptation to regard His life of Sonship as one in which Jesus Christ depended solely upon His eternal relation to the Father, and ignored the fact that Sonship had been united to subjectship, thus uniting a real humanity to an eternal Deity. Candlish deals with this very problem in the appendix to his Cunningham Lectures where he is discussing the question of Christ's obedience to the Father as the Son. He is contending for the truth that His was a real obedience, one indeed that He only learned and perfected through suffering; that in no way was He exempted from suffering just because He was the Divine Son of God. Indeed, the very opposite is the case.

"...he never, in all his sufferings, lost his apprehension of his filial oneness with the Father, so he never...made a stand upon it, as giving him any privilege of exemption, or any power of endurance for escape."²

This temptation to so misuse His Sonship was the point of vulnerability on

1 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1865 - pp.766-7

2 - The Fatherhood of God - Appendix - p.265

which Satan seized in order to defeat the Son of God, says Candlish.

"This..was the very temptation of the adversary - to lead him into such a use of his sonship. It was thus that he assailed him when, - immediately after the heavens had been opened at his baptism, and the Holy Ghost had descended upon him like a dove, and a voice from heaven proclaimed, "This is my beloved Son" - Jesus was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." (Matt.iv.1.-10) For what is the devil's plea? Is it not - "If thou be the Son of God?" All through the three acts of the temptation it is so."¹

Candlish taught clearly then, that Christ's human experience and enjoyment of His Sonship in His incarnate state did not depend solely on His Deity.

Indeed, His experience and enjoyment of His Sonship was in His human nature and under ordinary human limits and conditions. All his Divine prerogatives were willingly given up when "He emptied Himself taking upon Himself the form of a servant made in the likeness of men." Thus Christ's earthly life - His life of obedient Sonship - was one lived out by faith, and not a life lived by virtue of His Deity by which He was the Eternal Son of the Father. All this Candlish saw: all this Candlish taught: all this Candlish insisted upon as being at the very heart of the Christian Gospel. This is a point of view that is certainly not shared by all theologians today; not that the fact of His enjoyment of the Sonship in His incarnate state in His human nature is explicitly denied, so much as it is often ignored. That this was the case in the time of Candlish, is the theme of the reviewer of Candlish's Lectures on The Fatherhood of God, where he writes:

"There is a certain illusion with which, in contemplating the person of Christ, we are apt to suffer our minds to be beset; to the effect, namely, that Christ's enjoyment in his human nature of his own eternal Sonship is an immediate and ex necessitate effect of the hypostatic union. We are in danger of imagining that because through that union

1 - The Fatherhood of God - op.cit. - pp.265-266

Christ's human nature is..truly the Son of God, therefore it has direct, immediate, complete, and inevitable access to all that the Sonship involves. Were this true, it would establish an unapproachable, incommunicable peculiarity in the experience of Christ, as distinguished from all experience, in this matter, possible to his people;...At the very least it would represent Christ's human enjoyment and experience of the Sonship as limited only by the capacities conferred on the created creature thus enjoying it, and in no other respect left to be conditioned by the Sovereign will and Covenant arrangements of the Father. And this would assuredly countenance the idea that in virtue of the hypostatic union Christ's humanity possesses advantages for the enjoyment of the Sonship in which no other numerical instance of human nature can have communion...it is an idea wholly without foundation. Christ's human enjoyment of the Sonship is not an effect ex necessitate of the hypostatic union.....All actual enjoyment of the Sonship on Christ's part, in human consciousness and according to the function and action of his humanity, is not ex necessitate, but per fidem - by faith, according to the promise of the Father, and according to the agency of the Spirit. Christ neither claims nor receives for his humanity, even in personal union with his Godhead, immediate and unrestrained access to the resources of the Godhead or the privilege of the Sonship....When he assumed human nature into subsistence in his own Divine Person, he put himself in the position of a man pledged to "live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," and to receive no grace, no privilege whatever, save at the hands of the Spirit of God. And he placed himself, moreover, in the position of a Son pledged to verify his Sonship by the rule - from which he asked no exemption - "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (comp.Rom.viii.14 and Mat.iv.1); and pledged to trust in faith to the Father's grand combination of argument and promise - as to the force and fulfilment whereof surely the First-born among many brethren can be no exception, but must rather be the archetype and prime exemplar:- "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts crying, Abba, Father."¹

With all this Candlish was in undoubted agreement. Indeed the above quotation breathes the very spirit of Candlish's own utterances on the subject, making use even of the same Scriptures as Candlish himself was wont to use.² Nor would

1 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1865 - pp.767-8

2 - Especially Romans 8, often quoted by Candlish

Candlish have found himself in disagreement with that same reviewer when he goes on to say: "

"Unless we apprehend this, we utterly misapprehend all Christ's covenant position, his covenant relations, his covenanted enjoyments, sufferings, and achievements. From the nativity in Bethlehem to the offering of himself on Calvary, he never attempted to do, to enjoy, to suffer aught, save as "he through the eternal Spirit" did, enjoyed, suffered. Nor did the Spirit act on him any otherwise than according to the Word and promise of the Father. The Son, therefore acted, enjoyed, suffered in faith - faith wrought in Him, exactly as in his people, by the Spirit and Word - the agency of the Spirit and the instrumentality of the Word - of the living God, his own eternal Father. It is a glorious truth. It reveals his human consciousness and experience, ruled and conditioned as his people must be, by the promise and faithfulness of the Father, and by the agency and love of the Spirit, and by the powers and energies of faith thereby. It sounds and fathoms - as no other thought can - the import of his temptation in the wilderness, and reveals his precise conduct of the ordeal to which he was then subjected.....the intelligent reader will not fail to see how immediately and powerfully it bears on the question of the Sonship and of believer's participation in the Sonship.*¹

This telling quotation admirably sums up Candlish's views on the question of the enjoyment of the Sonship in Christ's human nature. In point of fact, it is, for the most part, largely a paraphrase of Candlish's own teaching replete with his Scriptural references.

For Candlish then, the Incarnation is all-important since it is the chosen medium of revelation to manifest the one eternal unchangeable Sonship of the Christ. The fact of the "Word made flesh" demonstrates as never before the fact that this Sonship is not exclusively confined to Deity, but can be, and indeed is, communicated to human nature. Thus, in the Incarnation we now see the eternal Sonship enjoyed by Christ in His Human nature under ordinary limits and ordinary conditions.

1 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1865 - pp.768-9

CHAPTER III

The Incarnation and the Sonship of Believers

a) The Original Relation Subsisting Between God and Man was Subjectship, and not Sonship.

Before proceeding to a positive exposition and evaluation of Candlish's teaching about the sonship of believers, we must first examine two basic pre-suppositions that condition his teaching. These two pre-suppositions are: The original relation subsisting between God and man was not sonship, but subjectship; and, before the Incarnation, God was not revealed or known by men as a Father. These two affirmations are absolutely basic to Candlish's doctrine of the sonship of believers. In his essay on Candlish as a theologian, Rainy says:

"The brief and emphatic statement of it all is, that as created men are not sons of God - not, at least, in any sense that is relevant"¹

In another place he writes:

". . . thus to be sons of God was not given to man in creation."²

Similarly, Rainy notes Candlish's teaching about the Fatherhood of God:

". . . the life of our incarnate Lord reveals a Sonship, and...implies a Fatherhood, surely not to be identified with the relation in which Adam stood."³

This denial of an original Fatherhood and Sonship abounds in the writings of Candlish. In his exposition of the Epistle to the Ephesians, he says:

". . . there is one God and Father; your God by nature, your Father by grace."⁴

1 - Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish, D.D. - p. 617

2 - Op. cit. - p. 616

3 - Op. cit. - pp. 619-620

4 - Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians - R.S. Candlish Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black: 1875 - p. 84

In a series of discourses, he writes:

"I touch here.....against the notion...of their being a relation of universal fatherhood and sonship between him and his intelligent creatures, constituted by the very fact of their creation..."¹

There are innumerable references to these two pre-suppositions that govern Candlish's doctrine of the sonship of believers scattered throughout all his theological works. However, it is to his Cunningham Lectures we must turn for his maturest thought and fullest exposition on this aspect of his theology. In this book, a whole chapter is given over to the subject, not including many other references scattered throughout the book. Here his arguments are initially levelled against those who would identify the creatorship of God with His paternity, as is expounded, for example, in Professor T.J. Crawford's book, The Fatherhood of God. Candlish argued that to conceive of God's creatorship as being identical with His Fatherhood, was, really, to evacuate Fatherhood of its true meaning. To say with Professor Crawford that

"fatherhood implies the origination by one intelligent person of another intelligent person like in nature to himself, and the continued support, protection, and nourishment of the person thus originated by him to whom he owes his being"²

may be true; indeed it is true replies Candlish, but what does it really say after all, about fatherhood and sonship?

". . . is there any relation of any sort defined or described here? - anything to determine on what footing the two intelligent persons are to stand to one another?"³

And the answer is 'No'.

1 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - p. 14

2 - Reply to Professor Crawford - op.cit. - p. xxvi

3 - Op.cit. - p. xxvi

With such a vague, indefinite, nebulous definition, which really says nothing about the nature of Fatherhood, everyone would agree. For Candlish the truth was that such a vague definition alone was possible when it was founded upon the erroneous notion that God's creatorship and God's Fatherhood were identical:

"If any choose to say that fatherhood is simply origination ...that paternity consists in bringing a new living person, whether instrumentally or otherwise, on the stage of the universe; and in that alone;...then of course creation and paternity are identical. God simply as creator, is the father of all his creatures. But, not to speak of the obvious difficulty that this establishes somewhat too wide a fatherhood since it makes it comprehensive, not only of all the higher intelligences, however ultimately sunk and lost; for fatherhood by creation can scarcely be conceived of otherwise than as natural, necessary, and inalienable: - but also of others besides, who may be still less welcome associates; - who does not see that it really evacuates the idea of fatherhood altogether of any precise or definite meaning; making the name little more than a euphonious synonym, or figurative personification, for causation; and in truth denying that there is any real paternal relation on the part of God at all."¹

And a little later in the same book he says:

"If the relation of fatherhood arises out of the fact of creation, it may be admitted that, in the case of intelligent creatures, it involves that. But it cannot be shown to involve more than that. And really, if that is all, the fatherhood of God, I repeat, is but a name. It is little, if anything more than a mere figure of speech."²

The great importance attached by Candlish to this whole question of the Fatherhood of God together with the sonship of men, can be seen in the way that

1 - The Fatherhood of God - op.cit. - pp. 15-16

2 - Op.cit. - p. 17

he keeps returning to the subject which he regards as of crucial importance.

"Let it be settled then, as a great fundamental truth, that on whatever other ground the relation of fatherhood in God may rest, and in whatever other sphere of divine operation or creature experience it may unfold itself, - it cannot have its rise in creation, and cannot have its place in that rule or government which is consequent upon creation. Let there be no confounding of things separate and distinct. Government by law and judgment is one thing; fatherhood is something altogether different."¹

And in a subsequent passage in the same volume, he writes:

"I do not think that there is....any trace of sonship constituted at creation graciously or ex gratia, any more than there is of sonship constituted by creation necessarily or ex necessitate."²

In the main, we can say that there were three reasons why Candlish was so certain that his views on the Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of men were correct. In the first place, he was convinced that an original Fatherhood and an original sonship had never constituted a part of the doctrine of the holy Catholic Church.

"So far as I can see, there is no trace of anything like natural or original sonship.....in men, having ever been accepted in the church as an article of belief."³

No doubt, there were men like T.J. Crawford, who would have denied that such was the case, and would have asserted in the strongest terms, that an original Fatherhood and an original sonship formed an important element in the teaching of the Christian Church down through the years. In point of fact, Crawford does so argue in his book, The Fatherhood of God. Whatever the truth of the matter may be, it is certain that Candlish was fully convinced that his own position anent these two doctrines was simply the teaching of the Church down through

1 - The Fatherhood of God - Op.cit. - pp. 18-19

2 - Op.cit. - pp. 21-22

3 - Op.cit. - p. 71

the ages from the time of the Apostles.

In the second place, if Candlish was convinced that the original Fatherhood of God and sonship of men formed no part of the doctrine of the holy Catholic Church, he was even more emphatic in declaring that such teaching was not found in - indeed, was contrary to - the testimony of Holy Scripture. As a Reformed theologian, the truth or falsity of the Fatherhood of God and the sonship of men was one that was to be gleaned from the Scriptures themselves:

"The inquiry concerning the fatherhood of God, its nature and foundation, - in what sense, to what effect, and on what ground, God is to be regarded as the Father of all or of any of his intelligent creatures, - is one that ought to be conducted on the principle of a pure and simple appeal to Scripture."¹

And Candlish was quite certain where he stood on these matters, having appealed to Scripture:

"That either angels or men were sons of God from the beginning of their being, is nowhere taught in holy Scripture."²

Since this was a verdict that was likely to be challenged - and was indeed strongly challenged by Professor Crawford, Candlish examines the passages of Scripture that are commonly supposed to teach an original Fatherhood and sonship, the full details of which can be seen in his third and fourth lectures of The Fatherhood of God. It is beyond the scope of this chapter fully to examine Candlish's arguments at this point, but we can set down his main teaching and criticisms. Beginning with the Old Testament, Candlish points out what must surely be a strange omission to those contending for an original

1 - The Fatherhood of God - Op.cit. - p. 2.

2 - Op. cit. - p. 71

Fatherhood and sonship, namely the fact that,

"There is not a hint of sonship in all that is said of Paradise, or of man's sin and fall there..Adam is tried simply as a creature, intelligent and free; - as a subject under authority and law. Not a hint is given of his having violated, when he transgressed, any filial obligation."¹

In conjunction with this, Candlish also points out that Christ is never set forth in Scripture as atoning for the sins of those who are originally sons. Consequently he can write:

"It is nowhere said that He atones for any filial offence; any offence committed by them as sons against God as their Father."²

Candlish examines a number of proof texts from the Old Testament that apparently teach that there is an original Fatherhood of God and an original sonship of men. His conclusion is that these texts cannot be said to prove any such thing. In his Reply to Professor Crawford, Candlish examines carefully Malachi 2:10 - "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?" and then comments:

"This looks like a strong assertion. It is to be observed, however, that, read in the light of the context, the force of the prophet's appeal turns, not on the universal fatherhood of God as regards mankind generally, but on his special fatherhood with reference to his chosen people Israel."³

Candlish concedes that the Old Testament speaks of a

"fatherhood...towards Israel."

and maintains that this passage in

"Malachi is simply one of these"⁴

1 - Op.cit. - p. 76

2 - The Fatherhood of God - Op.cit. - p. 77

3 - Reply to Professor Crawford - pp. xxx-xxxi

4 - Op. cit. - p. xxxi

passages found in the Old Testament.

"But there is nothing in it...like the assertion or implication of real and proper fatherhood and sonship as a relation subsisting personally between God and the individual man."¹

"There is a Son of God revealed in the Old Testament."²

argues Candlish, but it is the One Eternal Son Himself and none else. When it comes to the evidence of the New Testament, Candlish finds it just as conclusive in rejecting any notion of an original Fatherhood or sonship. He carefully examines a number of passages, notably in Hebrews and Galatians. After examining Hebrews 12:9, he summarizes as follows:

"Heb. 12:9, where God is called "the Father of our spirits," in contrast to "fathers of our flesh" (p. 35) Here again, the whole argument of the apostle has respect to believers, and to believers exclusively."³

A whole chapter of The Fatherhood of God is devoted to our Lord's teaching on sonship, and here again Candlish finds no evidence for an original sonship of men.

". . . I do not know that there is one instance recorded of his using the title of Father with reference to the world at large, or to men generally; or, indeed, with reference to any but those whom he was pleased to regard as his disciples, and to address and treat accordingly. He speaks to them of God as their Father ..⁴

"Our Lord...reveals God as sustaining this relation to disciples, and to them alone. God is their Father, not the Father of mankind generally."⁵

1 - The Fatherhood of God - Op.cit. - p. 81 footnote

2 - Op.cit. - p. 83

3 - Reply to Professor Crawford - pp. xxxi

4 - The Fatherhood of God - Op.cit. - pp. 102-103

5 - Op.cit. - pp. 129-130

Furthermore, Candlish contends that this is the real teaching of the Prodigal Son, in the face of a host of expositors who claim that the central teaching of the parable is the universal Fatherhood of God and sonship of men. Here is how Candlish sums up his argument:

"Surely this is the point of the parable...that...It turns wholly on the love with which God regards lost sinners, and his willingness to have them reconciled to himself. It does not turn at all on the precise nature either of any previous relation to him, or of any previous relation in which they may have stood to him... It warrants the widest and most unrestricted proclamation of the fatherhood of God as now, in his Son, brought within the reach of all."¹

For Candlish then, the uniform testimony of Scripture is plain. Neither the Old Testament revelation, nor the New Testament testimony - particularly the teaching of our Lord - provide any warrant whatsoever, for teaching an original Fatherhood of God or sonship of men.

Before leaving this, perhaps it ought to be pointed out that Candlish did teach that, before the Incarnation, God was actually the Father of those who trusted in him.

"The Old Testament church had little or no knowledge of God being a Father, in the sense of his sustaining a proper personal relation of fatherhood to men individually. When I say that, I do not of course mean that he was not the father of those who believed in his name; really and truly their father; as much so before as after the incarnation. I mean only that he did not see fit to reveal himself clearly and unreservedly in that character."²

In the third place, Candlish vigorously denied the doctrine of a universal Fatherhood and an original sonship because he was convinced that

1 - Op.cit. - pp. 132-133

2 - Op.cit. - p. 101

such teaching was quite destructive of evangelical truth. His own teaching, he believed was

"conservative of Evangelical Truth"¹

This destruction of evangelical truth, Candlish professed to see in the theology of F.D. Maurice and the Broad School.

According to Candlish in a statement re-iterated in his Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays, one of the main features - one which was so utterly reprehensible to Candlish - of Maurice's theology, was his categorical denial of all moral law and government on the part of God. For Maurice, God was an all-loving Father, but never a sovereign lawgiver and righteous judge. And Candlish saw clearly that this denial of God's moral law and government on the part of Maurice stemmed logically and inevitably from Maurice's teaching concerning a natural universal Fatherhood of God and sonship of all men. Candlish resisted Maurice's teaching at this point with all the passion and strength at his command. He did so because he was convinced beyond the shadow of any doubt, that such teaching was destructive of the great verities of the Christian Gospel, truths such as justification by faith, the atonement, and the adoption of sons.

Candlish's position is made clear in a number of his published volumes, notably in his Examination of Mr. Maurice's Essays, and On the Sonship and Brotherhood of Believers. In the last-named book, after speaking of the

1 - Op. cit. - p. lli - See also pp. xxix - xxx

idea of an original fatherhood and sonship he says:

"This notion is both very attractive and very prevalent...I wish therefore to explain the reason which has made me somewhat strenuously opposed to it, as affecting seriously the vital scriptural truths of the supremacy of law and the reality of guilt; and affecting, consequently...the doctrines of propitiation and justification...."¹

Fundamentally, Candlish opposes the idea of an original Fatherhood and sonship because such a doctrine leaves no room for a just God who pronounces judgment on sin and passes judgment on the sinner. And for Candlish,

"To do justice is his primary function."²

When considering this statement of Candlish about the justice of God as being primary, we must, of course bear in mind, that Candlish teaches plainly in other books, ³, that God's love, is the primary characteristic of the Father. Thus, he never exalts God's justice at the expense of His love. But he does say:

"...the notion of a natural and original fatherhood in God, embracing equally all his intelligent creatures...makes no account of anything strictly penal or retributive in the divine government. It resolves punishment into chastisement. It confounds the two together and makes an incoherent product. It leaves no room for any real atonement being considered necessary, or indeed possible."⁴

On the other hand, for those like himself who deny any such original Father-

1 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - pp. 14-15

2 - Op. cit. - p. 16

3 - See. e.g. The First Epistle of John - p. 386ff

4 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - p. 339

hood or sonship he can say,

"...the whole theology of those who are commonly considered orthodox and evangelical divines, is based upon an entirely different conception both of government and of law. According to them, it is an administrative government that God exercises, a government embracing in it legislation, judicial procedure, calling to account, awarding sentences; it is an authoritative law, with distinct sanctions annexed to it, that God promulgates and enforces. This is what they understand when they speak of God being a moral Ruler as well as a holy and loving Father. They cannot rid themselves of the impression, that both Scripture and conscience attest the reality of such a government and such a law."¹

Given an original Fatherhood and sonship, it becomes impossible for God to carry out His work as both a sovereign lawgiver and a righteous judge. Or as Candlish himself, puts it:

"On the theory of the original and universal fatherhood of God, I cannot see how this primary and essential condition of the divine government can be maintained and carried out."²

Candlish was criticized for his views in many quarters,³ but not even the eloquent arguments of Professor Crawford could move him; indeed, he sought to meet Crawford's arguments in a supplementary volume to the Fatherhood of God, and continue to maintain that the original relation subsisting between God and man was not Fatherhood or sonship, but creatorship and subjectship. In claiming that the original relationship sustaining between God and man prior to the Incarnation, was subjectship and not sonship, Candlish lays himself open to the criticism of working with non-biblical categories. Nowhere in his exposition does Candlish attempt to adduce proof from the Scriptures which shows that this original relationship between God and man, prior to the

1 - Op. cit. - pp. 338-339

2 - Op. cit. - p. 17

3 - See, e.g. pp. xxix-xxx of The Fatherhood of God where Candlish discusses such opposition to his views. See also: Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish, D.D., p. 618.

Word becoming flesh, was one of subjectship. And the reason is not hard to find. There is no such proof to be found in the Scriptures. Man is not regarded in his original relationship to God in the Bible merely as a subject, as Candlish contends.

It is apparent, however, that in Candlish, subjectship was merely a bad way of expressing a real truth, namely, that there is a difference - a very real difference - between the relationship in which man stood to God originally, and the evangelical sonship which the believer now enjoys in Christ. As Rainy remarks, this relationship which the believer presently enjoys through his union with Christ is

"not to be identified with the relation in which Adam stood. It presents definite conditions which mark it as something new and higher. Into fellowship with this Son believers come; and coming, they are sons with Him. The significance for this for Christian life is very remarkably dwelt upon in the Scriptures."¹

That our evangelical sonship in Christ was a newer, higher, and more permanent relationship to God was persuasively set forth by Candlish. Unfortunately, he resorted to the unbiblical notion of subjectship to do this. He might well have arrived at a more biblical way of expressing the relationship in which man stood to God prior to the incarnation had he developed the thought contained in a quotation of Goodwin's which he makes use of in his Cunningham Lectures,

"Adam was a son of God's by creation...But to be a Son of God by Christ, this is a higher thing....."²

1 - Memorials of R.S. Candlish, D.D. - W. Wilson, D.D. - p. 620

2 - The Fatherhood of God - R.S. Candlish - p. xix

As Rainy has it,

"Dr. Candlish's treatment of the original condition of man assumed too much of the character of a simple polemic against Sonship, and in favour of subjectship...Certainly no justice is or can be done...by those who perplex all Scripture teaching, postulating a Sonship for all mankind such as Scripture ascribes to believers. Dr. Candlish..was right in marking the Sonship which we have in Christ, as intrinsically and supernaturally contrasted with the relation in which Adam stood, and which, marred by sin, we inherit...Perhaps if he had combined his main assertion with a more sympathetic weighing of the texts and facts which have suggested to most minds the impression of a goodness we may well call fatherly, he might have strengthened and enriched his theory."¹

b) The Incarnation now Reveals that Sonship Can be Communicated to Humanity

For Candlish then, there can be no dubiety about the fact that the original relation subsisting between God and man was that of creatorship and subjectship, and not Fatherhood and sonship. At first sight, this affirmation might appear to present an insurmountable barrier to men becoming the sons of the Most High. If sonship - real sonship - is limited to the One Eternal Son of God, and if men are, by nature, not sons but merely subjects, how is this gulf to be bridged? How can men pass from the state of subjectship to the state of sonship? As we have already seen, Candlish teaches that the gulf is decisively bridged in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. The fact that "the Word became flesh" has once and for all, demonstrated not just the possibility of men's sonship, but the actuality of sonship being communicated to humanity:

"...the incarnation discovers the communicableness of the relation of fatherhood and sonship, as it exists in the Godhead...In point of fact, the incarnation shows this relation actually communicated to humanity, and shared in by humanity, in the person of "the man Christ Jesus."²

1 - Memorials of R.S. Candlish, D.D. - W. Wilson, - p. 620

2 - The Fatherhood of God - Op.cit. - p. 41

This is true because Christ's Eternal Sonship has in no way been modified or changed by the fact of His having become incarnate. Again and again, Candlish rightly insists that

"there are not two sonships"

and that

"The sonship...the original and eternal relation in which the Person in the Godhead stands to the Second, as his uncreated, only-begotten Son, cannot be conceived of as altered or modified by the Son's becoming incarnate...His proper personality is not thereby affected...He continues to be the Son of the Father in the very same sense exactly in which he has been the Son of the Father from everlasting."¹ . . . "As God and man, in two distinct natures, he is one person standing in the one personal relation of sonship to the Father. That is what he begins to be from the moment of his becoming incarnate. And he is so, all throughout his earthly course. There is no such thing as dualism, or duality, about this thoroughly human Son of God, as he is seen walking before our eyes in Galilee and Judea."²

Not only does the Incarnation reveal sonship being communicated to humanity; it also reveals it as being communicated to humanity in the subject state:

"...the fact of the incarnation..discovers..its entire consistency when communicated with another relation - that of subjectship"³

writes Candlish concerning sonship. For Candlish, the crux of the problem of how the one true sonship can be communicated to a humanity that stands before its Creator as subjects is met in the union of the two relations of

1 - Op. cit. - p. 42

2 - Op. cit. - pp. 43-44

3 - The Fatherhood of God - Op. cit. p. 49

sonship and subjectship in the Person of Jesus Christ:

"The problem is now seen actually solved by the union of the two natures....in Jesus Christ as come in the flesh. In virtue of the one nature, he is the Son; in virtue of the other nature, he is a subject. And being one person..he is at once both son and subject."¹

And for Candlish, it is this wonderful union of the two relations, sonship and subjectship, in the one person of the Incarnate Lord, which constitutes the never-ceasing wonder and unending glory of the Incarnation. At this point, the question might well be put: How does the Incarnation communicate the one eternal Sonship to a humanity whose subjectship is not perfect, but indeed marred and broken by sin? It were one thing to communicate Sonship to a subjectship such as Adam possessed before the Fall; but how can sonship be communicated to a humanity whose subjectship has become disordered by the ravages of the Fall? The question provides no problem for Candlish who states quite plainly, that:

"The incarnation not only brings the eternal Son into the relation of a subject and a servant, but brings him into that relation after it has sustained a great shock,..after it has become thoroughly disordered and deranged."²

But how is this possible? How is this brought about? Again Candlish has his answer. The sonship of Christ can be communicated to sinful humanity because Christ becomes one with us sinful men, or as Candlish puts it:

"The Son of God, in his incarnation, becomes one of us men, one with us men. He becomes one of us, one with us, as fallen creatures, guilty, corrupt, condemned."³

1 - Op. cit. - p. 50

2 - Op. cit. - p. 55

3 - Op. cit. - p. 55

At first sight, it might appear as if Candlish were teaching that Christ in His Incarnation assumed "fallen flesh," that he took upon Himself our sinful nature. But this is not the case. In a later chapter, we shall be considering more fully, the question of Candlish's doctrine of the nature of Christ's humanity, but ^{it is sufficient} sufficeth it for the present to state that Candlish does not teach that Christ assumes our sinful nature. Admittedly he comes very close to it; at times he hovers on the very brink of such an admission; but in his Cunningham Lectures he writes:

"I have always felt a difficulty in conceiving of the Holy Son of the Most High becoming man, exactly as man now is since the fall, without qualification or reservation. It has always seemed to me to imply a derogation from his holiness...I cannot therefore, reconcile myself to the idea of his assuming the human nature in its corrupt condition, and under the personal liabilities consequent upon the fall. I hold his manhood to be what unfallen Adam's manhood was."¹

But if Candlish teaches that Christ in his Incarnation assumed human flesh before the Fall, he teaches also that Christ

"shares with us the relation in which we stand to God as subjects, not in its original integrity, as it was at the first, but as it is now, I repeat, disordered and deranged."²

From this statement it will be seen how crucially important is the distinction that Candlish makes between a "nature" and a "relation." With respect to Christ's nature, Candlish holds that Christ assumed Adam's unfallen manhood, but with respect to Christ's relation which he shares with us in our standing as subjects, Candlish holds that it is that relation as it now exists, deranged

1 - The Fatherhood of God - Op. cit. - 56

2 - Op. cit. - p. 55

by sin. Having discussed the question of Christ's nature, Candlish goes on to say:

"But the question of relation is altogether different. For the very same reason for which I maintain that he assumes our nature in the incarnation, not as it is now, but as it was before the fall, I maintain also that he enters into our relation ~~to~~ God, as his subjects and servants, in its present, not in its original state."¹

In order, thus, to sustain his argument that Christ's Sonship can be communicated to humanity, Candlish appeals to the union of the two relations of Sonship and subjectship in the one Person of Jesus Christ. At this point Candlish introduces the distinction between the "nature" that Christ assumed in the Incarnation, and the "relation" which He shares with us in our standing as subjects. By introducing this distinction between a "nature" and a "relation" at this point, Candlish is able to say that, while on the one hand Christ assumed our nature - i.e. Adam's unfallen nature - on the other hand, Christ also enters into the relation of our subjectship as marred by sin here and now. The distinction then between a "nature" and a "relation" as set down by Candlish, thus allows him to say that Christ has assumed man's unfallen nature on the one hand, and that he has entered into our relation of subjectship as it exists now, on the other.

The question is: is there really any need to postulate this doubtful distinction between a "nature" and a "relation"? Is this not merely an evasion on the part of Candlish, so that he need not say, what he almost

1 - Op. cit. - p. 57

says, but finally shrinks from saying, namely, that Christ really assumed our sinful flesh? Surely the real question here is: How can Christ sustain a relation to us whereby He shares our standing as sinful subjects, unless He also shares our sinful nature? "The unassumed is the unredeemed." Candlish ought here to have sustained his argument that the Incarnation reveals that the one Sonship can be communicated to humanity by the union of the two relations, not by appealing to some doubtful distinction between a "nature" and a "relation", but by stating forthrightly that Christ shares our sinful subjectship because He has, in the Incarnation, assumed our fallen flesh. The possibility, nay the actuality of the two relations of Sonship and subjectship uniting in the same person, stems from the fact of the Incarnation, as Candlish has pointed out; but what he failed to point out was that it is an Incarnation in which the Word not only became flesh, but became sinful flesh.

For Candlish then, the fact that our subjectship is marred by sin, in no way prevents the one sonship from being communicated to humanity because:

"In the person of the man Christ Jesus, the incarnate Son of the living God, the relation of sonship to God, which from everlasting is his glory...must now for a time co-exist with the relation of criminality and condemnation under God's righteous sentence."¹

And if Christ's coming in the flesh demonstrates that it is entirely

1 - The Fatherhood of God - Op. cit. - p. 57

possible for Him who is the Eternal Son by nature, to be also a subject sharing with us our broken humanity,

"May it not, must it not, be regarded as going far to demonstrate the converse also, that it is possible for those who are naturally subjects and servants to be sons, as he is - to enter somehow and to some extent into his relation to God as his Son, as he enters into their relation to God as his subjects and servants?"¹

This, of course, raises the problem of how the sonship is actually communicated to us men, which problem will be answered when we come to the next chapter to consider the whole question of adoption and regeneration.

c) The Believer's Sonship is Identical with Christ's Sonship

"The saints, being united to Christ, shall have a more glorious union with, and enjoyment of, the Father, than otherwise could be: for hereby their relation becomes much nearer; they are children of God in a higher manner than otherwise they could be; for, being members of God's own Son, they are partakers of his relation to the Father, - of his sonship..."²

This quotation from Jonathan Edwards which appears on the flyleaf of the Cunningham Lectures, tersely sets forth Candlish's view that the sonship of believers is virtually identical with the Sonship of Christ. The great importance attached to this doctrine of the identity of sonships can be seen in the great stress Candlish places on the doctrine as evidenced by

1 - Op. cit. - p. 51

2 - The Fatherhood of God - Flyleaf

the multiplicity of references to it in his various works. In the preface to The Fatherhood of God, he says:

"I have not hesitated to avow my belief in the substantial identity of the relation...between the believer's sonship and that of Christ."¹

In another volume, he puts it thus:

"And it is in virtue of this intimate connection and oneness ...with the Son...that they come to stand to the Father in the same filial relation in which the Son himself stands..."²

And a few pages later in the same volume, we are told, that:

"We become sons, as he is the Son."³

The same prominence is seen in Candlish's Biblical commentaries; e.g. in The First Epistle of John, where there are copious references to this identity of sonship between Christ and the believer:

"Into all that the Son is to the Father...we enter when we abide in the Son. And so we come to be to the Father all that the Son is to the Father."⁴ "He would have us to be his sons as he had Jesus to be his Son."⁵ "By redemption, by adoption, by regeneration; as bought and begotten; you are of God; his own very sons, as Jesus is."⁶

The teaching that the believer enters into Christ's own very Sonship is woven into the very fabric of all of Candlish's teaching about sonship.

1 - Op. cit. - p. xxi

2 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - p. 10

3 - Op. cit. - p. 14

4 - The First Epistle of John - p. 200

5 - Op. cit. - p. 225

6 - Op. cit. - p. 550

It should be noted, however, that there were, according to Candlish, two qualifications governing this identity of Sonship. In the first place, Candlish recognized and taught that the believer's sonship and Christ's Sonship rested on different grounds, without however detracting from the fact of the identity of the two sonships. Here is what he says: Regarding

"the nature of the connection between the believer's sonship and that of Christ.....I have of course insisted upon certain very material differences. In particular, I have been careful to discriminate between the original ground of a relation, or the manner in which it is constituted or subsists, and its proper nature. It may rest on different grounds and be differently constituted, in two different parties sustaining it, and yet be truly the same relation."¹

Christ's own Sonship has its origin in the Godhead wherein he is the only-begotten of the Father. This is the origin of His Sonship. The origin of the believer's sonship is in Christ Himself, as incarnate. But even though the two sonships rest on different grounds, they are, nonetheless, identical, argues Candlish.

In the second place, Candlish teaches that while our sonship is substantially the same as His, we can never hope to enter into the fulness and richness of the sonship experience, in the same measure as does Christ Himself. This, of course, is simply a difference in degree, not a difference in kind.

"...it must ever be kept in mind that there may be the widest possible difference also, as to the capacities of the two parties respectively for apprehending the relation in all its fulness. When the one party is divine as well as human, and the other human merely, the difference in this respect must be literally immense. Still it may be held to be the same relation, without in the least confounding divinity and humanity, or making man God, or equal to God."²

1 - The Fatherhood of God - Op. cit. - p. xxi

2 - Op. cit. - p. xci

Of less importance perhaps, nevertheless taught by Candlish, is this: we believers in our experience of the sonship, can know nothing of Christ's experience of the Sonship which He enjoyed with the Father before the Incarnation. The fellowship that the Son experienced with the Father before "the Word became flesh" is something of which we believing sons can know nothing.

For Candlish, then, the sonship of believers, because it has its only source in the Sonship of Christ, is identical with that sonship of His, bearing in mind the qualifications already spoken of. Candlish regarded this doctrine as one of immense importance and practical significance. Indeed, a sonship that did not take its rise in Christ's own sonship; a sonship that was not identical with that of the only-begotten Son, was absolutely worthless. Candlish taught that true sonship, sonship that was in effect, identical with Christ's own, had this tremendous virtue: it gave the believer perfect assurance that his place in the Father's house as a son was a permanent one, even as was the place of the only-begotten Son a permanent one. Otherwise, there is no guarantee whatsoever, that we are sons of God for all eternity:

"This, as it seems to me, is the peculiar benefit of sonship; this is its great...distinctive characteristic property. It puts an end conclusively to probation, in every sense, and in every form. It secures permanence of position in the household...of God."¹

1 - The Fatherhood of God - Op. cit. - p. 176

And he goes on to say:

"I consider that our Lord has really settled this whole matter in one remarkable passage which, as I understand it, is the divine key to unlock the mystery of God's fatherhood and his people's sonship..."The servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."....."1....Clearly, as I apprehend his words, the Lord intends, in this divine reasoning, to represent his own sonship, and that alone, as absolutely ensuring permanence of position in the house... of his Father. And just as clearly, to my mind, he indicates his willingness to share that sonship, and that feature or quality of it, with us."2

Candlish's doctrine of the virtual identity of the believer's sonship with that of Christ Himself, was one that was attacked in many quarters.³

Rainy, speaking of this teaching writes:

"...it was a startling thing to have the Sonship of believers identified so decisively with the Sonship of our Lord - as in fact the same relation - His by original right, ours by gracious communication...Much rather scornful criticism was therefore bestowed on the book⁴ by some respectable theologians. They hardly perceived that in doing so they were resigning themselves to maintain a position of considerable vagueness. They were also driven to adopt views not a little crude - as for instance that of a double Sonship in our Lord, a thing not welcome theologically, and most embarrassing in exegesis. It would have been more to the point to advert to the theological interests which Dr. Candlish sought to provide for, and to the direction in which his suggestions pointed."⁵

Candlish had anticipated the criticism that the sonship in which believers

1 - Op. cit. - p. 179 - The passage under consideration is a favourite one with Candlish - John 8:35-36 - See Appendix v for a fuller exposition of this passage.

2 - Op. cit. - p. 181

3 - See, e.g. Reply to Professor Crawford and Crawford's book, The Fatherhood of God

4 - The Fatherhood of God - Op. cit.

5 - Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish, D.D. - p. 619

participate was a different sonship from that of Christ. He says:

"...it must be his own very sonship that I have...Nor does he hint that it is another sonship he would share with me than that which has been ever his; a sonship different from that which by eternal generation he has. To partake with him in a merely human sonship severed from the divine...can scarcely satisfy me now if it is one with himself that I would be a son. For I would be a son as one with himself whole and entire...himself as I see him in his incarnate state; not man only, but God-man; Immanuel, God with us; God manifest in the flesh."¹

Candlish was well aware that his views were adversely received in some important theological quarters, but believing as he did that his teaching was both Scriptural and in the mainstream of the Church's teaching, he remained unshaken.

"I am aware that the views which I have been submitting as to the relation of fatherhood and sonship being the same in the case of Christ's disciples that it is in that of Christ himself, may seem startling to some minds. I may appear to them to be going, not only against certain modern speculations, but also against the opinions of the early fathers, which...are entitled to more weight. I think...that the difference may be more apparent than real."²

Candlish then proceeds to argue that his doctrine anent the identity of the believer's and Christ's Sonship was the teaching of the Fathers and other luminaries of the Christian Church. In the preface to his Cunningham Lectures, he quotes copiously from such diverse authorities as Athanasius, Schleiermacher, and Hooker to prove his point, together with an apt quotation from Treffry, who appears to be paraphrasing Irenaeus:

"He who by nature is the Son of God becomes the Son of man, that we, who by nature are sons of men, may become sons of God."³

1 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - pp. 56-57

2 - The Fatherhood of God - Op. cit. - p. 127

3 - Op. cit. - p. xxvi cf. also p. 356

Notwithstanding the assertion to the contrary in certain quarters concerning the identity of the believer's sonship with that of Christ's Candlish, believing that he stood in the mainstream of the Church's tradition, affirmed that there is an absolute identity between our sonship and Christ's. Nor did he think that in believing this he stood alone, for he wrote,

"...the writers to whom I am referring...virtually hold the filial relation of believers to God to be so closely connected with Christ's that it might be reckoned substantially the same."¹

Even when we make allowance for Candlish's two qualifications, first, that the believer's sonship and Christ's own Sonship rest on different grounds, and, second, that believers can never hope to enter into the fulness of Christ's Sonship, his dogmatic assertion that the believer's sonship is identical with Christ's comes as something of a surprise. No wonder Rainy commented,

"It was a startling thing to have the Sonship of believers identified so decisively with the Sonship of our Lord - as in fact the same relation - His by original right ours by gracious communication."²

Candlish admitted that the two sonships rested on very different grounds. He conceded that Christ's Sonship had its origin in the mystery of the Trinitarian relationships which existed from all eternity, while the believer's sonship rested on the fact of the Incarnation. Yet he drew the strange conclusion that the two sonships were identical. Here, of course, we must say

1 - The Fatherhood of God - R.S. Candlish - p. 129

2 - Memorials of R.S. Candlish - W. Wilson, D.D. - p. 619

quite simply that Candlish was wrong. It was the wrong way to describe a great truth, namely that there was a very real relationship between the Sonship of Christ and the sonship of believing men. However, since the very ground of Christ's Sonship is in the Godhead, in those eternal and inscrutable relations between the Persons of the Trinity, by definition, Christ's Sonship is absolutely unique. Such a relationship to the Father as is enjoyed by the eternal Son cannot be entered into by the creature. To maintain that it can is surely to confound the Divine and the human. No doubt Candlish was anxious - and not without good reason - to prevent the evangelical sonship of believers' from being dissolved into a purely natural relationship between the Creator and the creature; no doubt he was anxious to elevate the sonship of believers to that high plane on which it rests in Scripture where it is said that believers are "partakers of the divine nature". That is one thing. But to equate the believer's sonship with the unique Sonship of Him who is homousion with the Father, is simply to confuse the issue. As Rainy rightly says:

"It is hard to reason of the "identity" of the relation to God into which we are adopted in Christ; with the relation so far as that is Sonship, of the Son to the Father. It may be enough to say that in some singular and unsearchable manner the eternal Sonship - nothing less - is in the heart of that whole standing of privilege and love, by which the Church and all her members learn what it is to be sons of God."¹

1 - Memorials of R.S. Candlish - W. Wilson, D.D. - p. 621

CHAPTER IV

The Incarnation and How Sonship is Communicated to Believers

a) Sonship is Communicated to Believers Through Union with Christ

Up to this point, we have seen how Candlish taught that the Incarnation brings a completely new revelation of the one eternal sonship; and that, Christ the Incarnate Word, by taking upon Himself the subject state, has made it possible for the eternal sonship to be communicated to humanity:

"..by the incarnation and in the whole person of the God-man, the Eternal Sonship is revealed as embarked and committed on the official covenant work of the last Adam, the Lord from heaven it is an Eternal Sonship deposited in human nature in his person, that wearers of the same nature, mystically united to his person, may have communion in it."¹

For Candlish then, sonship is communicated to believers through union with Christ. It is

"Participation in this divine-human life"

that

"makes a man a Christian.... The ground and central point of Christianity is the oneness of Deity and humanity effected through the incarnation of God and deification of man."²

The absolute centrality of this doctrine of union with Christ is affirmed again and again in the writings of Candlish. He kept this doctrine to the forefront in his own theological system and he urged others to do likewise. Once when addressing students at New College, he counselled them as follows:

"..in all your doctrinal statements, make it palpably plain that it is salvation in Christ, not salvation through Christ that you preach. Let the root of all personal religion be the personal union of the believer and the object of his faith."³

Nor was this union, this oneness with Christ to be construed as being merely an "imputed" oneness, or, as some taught, a mere legal fiction:

¹ The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1865 - p.786.

² The Gospel of Forgiveness - R. S. Candlish - pp.479-480.

³ Op. cit. - p.460.

"..let the principle upon which the salvation of the sinner.. turns or depends, be clearly understood. It is his union or oneness with Christ. He is in Christ and Christ is in him. They are truly and spiritually "one" (1 Cor. vi.17). Their union or oneness is not an idea merely, but a great fact. It is not simply imputative, or by imputation... There is imputation, - but it is because there is reality, - in the union formed between Christ the Saviour and me "the chief of sinners." The imputation which the union carries in it, depends on the reality of the union. The oneness is not a legal fiction;.... It is real, personal, and vital."¹

The truth that our oneness with Christ is a real union - no mere legal fiction, is one that Candlish returned to again and again. In his book on Ephesians, he writes:

"As the one Lord, he identifies you all alike, not in law only, or in a legal form, but in a true and real personal union with himself."²

And in another passage in the same book, he says:

"...the oneness indicated by the phrase "in the Lord" ... is not a mere legal oneness, your being accounted one in the eye of the law: it is so; but it is so because it is a real spiritual oneness of character, a oneness of nature, a oneness of heart and mind and soul."³

Treading in the footsteps of the theologians of the Reformed Faith, and keeping close to the testimony of the Scriptures, Candlish stressed that the fulness of our salvation - and especially our sonship - comes to us only in and through our union with our Risen Head:

"...union with Christ, which is spiritual and mystical, yet real and inseparable...is a union so close, intimate and personal, as to imply communion; - or joint participation with him in what is his. Embracing Christ as offered freely in the gospel, made willing and able by the Spirit to do so, we are so thoroughly, vitally, truly, one with Christ, that we share with him in whatever belongs to him as Christ."⁴

And later in the same book, he writes:

"...all the good we get through Christ comes through our being one with him; in such sense and to such effect one with him as to be partakers with him in all that is his."⁵

¹ The Atonement: Its Reality, Completeness and Extent
² R. S. Candlish. London: T. Nelson & Sons: 1861 - pp.277-278
³ Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians - R. S. Candlish - p.87.
⁴ Op. cit. - p.214
⁵ On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - pp.38-39.
Op. cit. - p.54.

In his writings, Candlish illustrates profusely this central truth that the fulness of our salvation comes to us only in our union with the Risen Lord. In a volume on the Resurrection, he makes the point that Christ's representation on our behalf is bound up with the thought of union with Christ:

"They are all likewise in Christ, not only as being represented by him, but also as becoming one with him; partakers of his nature; associated with him in his relation to the Father; in his righteousness, life, and glory... The representation, in short, is through union. We are represented by another, because we are, or we are to become, one with him who represents us."¹

Furthermore, our redemption is only a reality to us because of our union with our Redeemer:

"It is not from Christ or through Christ that you have it, but in Christ. The condition of your having redemption through his blood....is your being in Christ."²

In his exposition of the First Epistle of John, Candlish repeatedly makes a very close connection between eternal life and sonship, and our union with Christ:

"We must have become his children, his sons, begotten of him in time, through believing union with the Son who is begotten of him from eternity;"³

And in another passage we read:

"But I have him also as the Son, in his filial relation to the Father....I speak of him as he has been since his incarnation, and as he will continue to be through...eternity. When I have him, I have him thus; as he now is and ever will be. I have the Son and in him I have the very life which the Father has given him."⁴

But for Candlish, it is the fact that we, through union with our blessed Head, come to share His own very sonship, that is the greatest benefit, and the ultimate blessing deriving from our oneness with Christ:

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- 1 - Life in a Risen Saviour - R. S. Candlish - pp.68-69
Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black: 1858.
 - 2 - Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians - p.29.
 - 3 - The First Epistle of John - R. S. Candlish - p.383.
 - 4 - Op. cit. - p.497.

"..I cannot but think that the actual realisation of sonship...forms a natural and fitting climax to the Calvinistic doctrine of grace. The essence or heart's-core of that doctrine is the personal union of the individual believer to him in whom he believes. This union or identification begins at the lowest point of the humiliation of the Son of God. It is there that the Holy Spirit effects, as it were, the junction... I am persuaded that nothing less than that does full justice to my Calvinistic creed."¹

In his understanding of, and emphasis on, union with Christ, Candlish stood squarely in the Reformed Tradition, following especially John Calvin, from whom he had learned much indeed concerning the doctrine of union with Christ:

"I hold it to be the precious distinction of our Scottish theology, as of the Reformation theologians generally, that it makes all personal religion, with all its blessed experiences... turn altogether upon that principle; the principle..of oneness with Christ, real personal oneness with Christ..."²

Wilhelm Niesel goes so far as to suggest that union with Christ is

"The Basic Confession of the Reformed Churches"³,

as well as being central to the theology of John Calvin:

"It must...be said..that our salvation is wholly and completely outside us (extra nos) in Christ....According to Reformed doctrine... the answer to the question how salvation (justification, sanctification, and eternal life) is brought to men is that not only the preparation for salvation but also its actual communication to men, depends wholly on Jesus Christ. 'When speaking of the free mercies of God, I invariably begin with Christ, and rightly so, for until He becomes ours we must necessarily be completely devoid of all the gifts of grace which are wholly enclosed in Him.' Thus for..Calvin... 'that joining together of Head and members, that indwelling of Christ in our hearts - in short, that mystical union' is fundamental."⁴

That the 'mystical union' is fundamental in Calvin, can be seen clearly by the many references to it in The Institutes, as well as in his New Testament commentaries.⁵

Speaking of Christ's grace while refuting Osiander's doctrine of "essential righteousness", Calvin says:

1 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - pp.xxxii - xxxiii.

2 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - pp.54-55.

3 - Reformed Symbolics - p.181.

4 - Op. cit. - pp.181-182.

5 - See, e.g. the Institutes of the Christian Religion - J. Calvin Library of Christian Classics Edition. esp. 3:11:5-12 and 3:2:24.

"..I confess that we are deprived of this utterly incomparable good until Christ is made ours. Therefore, that joining together of Head and members, that indwelling of Christ in our hearts - in short, that mystical union - are accorded to us the highest degree of importance, so that Christ, having been made ours, makes us sharers with him in his gifts with which he has been endowed. We do not therefore, contemplate him outside ourselves from afar in order that his righteousness may be imputed to us but because we put on Christ and are engrafted into his body - in short, because he deigns to make us one with him."¹

As Niesel observes,

"Calvin never tires of emphasising"

union with Christ

"especially in his sacramental doctrine. What we receive is not gifts or powers, important as these are, but God Himself in the form of His Son. The result of this event is that believers 'are not merely united with Him but one with Him, and indeed in such a unity that in it, in a sense, there is a certain shadowing forth of that most single unity, in which the Divine Persons are a single entity among themselves."²

For Calvin, as for Candlish, the bestowal of Christ and all His benefits to sinful men is irrevocably bound up with union with our Head and King:

"How do we receive those benefits which the Father bestowed on his only-begotten Son - not for Christ's own private use, but that he might enrich poor and needy men? First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us. Therefore, to share with us what he has received from the Father, he had to become ours and to dwell within us. For this reason, he is called "our Head" (Eph.4:15), and "the first-born among many brethren" (Rom.8:29). We also...are said to be "engrafted into him" (Rom.11:17), and to "put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27); for, as I have said, all that he possesses is nothing to us until we grow into one body with him.....by faith."³

In his doctrine of union with Christ, Calvin was careful to guard against

- 1 - Institutes of the Christian Religion - John Calvin - pp.736-7 - 3:11:10.
- 2 - Reformed Symbolics - Wilhelm Niesel - p.182.
Edinburgh & London: Oliver & Boyd: 1962 (Translated by David Lewis.)
- 3 - Institutes of the Christian Religion - 3:1:1, p.537.

4 - Op. cit. - 3:11:10, p.737.

the charge of regarding union as "a mixture of substance". Indeed, Calvin specifically refers to this notion in his quarrel with Osiander, categorically rejecting any such notion of union as "a mixture of substance", or union as that in which

"God pours himself into us as a gross mixture".¹

In order to guard against this false notion, Calvin stressed that union with Christ was a total union whereby the believer was united to Christ, to the whole Christ, united in body and soul with Christ's two natures, both human and divine. As Niesel comments, What is meant by union with Christ therefore,

"is not merely a communion of souls or a community of religious feeling (Schleiermacher). It is not just a union with Christ's Divinity but with His whole Person, in which divinity and humanity are united...For Reformed preaching it is fundamental that union is with the whole God-man and not merely one aspect of His being."²

The mystical union betwixt Christ and the believer through which come all the benefits of salvation, as held by Calvin and Candlish, must not be confused with the mystics doctrine of union, thought of as man's mystical absorption with the Divine. In this doctrine, man is at last freed from the material world, especially from the body,

"stripped of all opposition to God, and so finally reached and loses himself in the Supreme Being..He loses himself in order to merge into the supreme good.."³

Such is not the teaching of either the Scriptures or the Reformed Church. Indeed,

"The mystical union spoken of by Reformed theologians and confessions on the basis of the New Testament, is something quite different. The relationship here is not between created

1 - Op. cit. - 3:11:10, p.737.

2 - Reformed Symbolics - W. Niesel - p.183-4.

3 - Op. cit. - p.185.

being and divine being but between the sinner and the Redeemer. It is not a doctrine of being (ontology) but a doctrine of salvation (soteriology)....Man may submerge himself in some sort of divinity but not in God the Lord, to whom we belong. If this is ignored, as was the case sometimes in pietism and romanticism (Schleiermacher), the doctrine of the union mystica seriously endangers the whole of theology. Jesus Christ's place as the Mediator between God and man is assailed and.. becomes superfluous: and an immediacy of man to Christ is claimed in forgetfulness of the fact that man is and remains a sinner. Theology is changed into mysticism."¹

Niesel reminds us that Calvin, by keeping

"strictly to the eschatological boundary"²,

makes it plain that there is nothing in common between his doctrine of union with Christ and the doctrine of union with the Divine as set forth by the mystics.

"Not only does He cleave to us by an indivisible bond of fellowship, but with a wonderful communion, day by day, he grows more and more into one body with us, until he becomes completely one with us."³

Not, of course, that this union is perfectly consummated here on earth, for Calvin. Only in glory will this union be perfected and consummated in the believer.⁴

"Beyond the union enjoyed with Christ here, stands the consummation at the Last Day. Our union now is with the Christ whom we know will come again and manifest the true life of his own. But He is already our Lord and we already belong to Him here and now."⁵

1 - Op. cit. - p.185.

2 - Op. cit. - p.185.

3 - Op. cit. - p.185.

4 - Calvin, Opera, Vol. xii, p.715.

5 - Reformed Symbolics - p.186.

From this short summary of Calvin's doctrine of union with Christ, it will be evident that Candlish was indeed debtor to the great Genevan doctor, and that Candlish's own doctrine of union with Christ is Reformed to the core.

b) This Union is Effected by the Spirit through Regeneration

Christ's Sonship is communicated to believers through their union with their Risen Lord. This immediately prompts the question: But how is this union with Christ brought about? Candlish's answer is:

"Union to Christ is effected by the Spirit in a very special work of Regeneration."¹

Actually, our union with Christ whereby we are made sons as He is the Son, also includes our adoption:

"The mode of admission into the evangelical sonship is..both.. by adoption and regeneration."²

For the purposes of our discussion, we shall consider first, the bearing of the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration on our union with Christ, and then the relationship of adoption to that same union. For Candlish, the work of regeneration by the Spirit, stands at the very heart of the doctrine of our sonship through union with Christ. It is a fact that he never seems to tire of emphasizing:

"To be "born of the Spirit" may...be shown to be..an indispensable preliminary condition of that nature and that state being reconcilable with sonship."³

Here, of course, Candlish stands squarely in the Reformed tradition, especially in the teaching of Calvin, who writes:

1 - British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1865 - p.770.

2 - Reply to Professor Crawford - p.lxxxv.

3 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - p.145.

"It is clear...that he is speaking of regeneration which is the beginning of the spiritual life;..."¹

And even more specifically in one of his commentaries, the Genevan theologian says:

"...to be the children of God we must be born anew and...the Holy Spirit is the author of this second birth...It is as if Christ had said that no one is a son of God until he has been renewed by water and that this water is the spirit who cleanses us anew and...that the Kingdom of God is closed to us unless an entrance be opened to us by a new birth."²

Thus the work of the Spirit stands at the very centre of the work of regeneration. Indeed, Candlish repeatedly asserts that the main function, the chief office of the Holy Spirit, is that of effecting our regeneration:

"The work of the Holy Spirit thus finds its proper place as glorifying Christ. His office or function is to unite me to Christ, to effect a close and indissoluble personal oneness between Christ and me."³

In sermons and commentaries alike we find the same stress:

"The same Eternal Spirit through whom Christ offers himself without spot to God, is upon you and in you. It is he, the Eternal Spirit, who joins you to Christ. It is he who shuts you up into Christ. It is he who originates and sustains a real living personal union between you and Christ."⁴

"...the Holy Ghost...teaches you to learn Christ...and he teaches you in Christ. You are taught by the Spirit and taught in Christ. It is your oneness with Christ, your being in him and abiding in him, that the Spirit makes the effectual means of your being taught. Through your real and living personal union to Christ, and in your real and living personal communion with Christ, you are taught by the Spirit...."⁵

1 - The Institutes of the Christian Religion - p.298, 2:3:6.

2 - Calvin's Commentaries: St. John - Translator - T. H. L. Parker Oliver & Boyd: Edinburgh & London: 1959 - Vol. 1, p.65.

3 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - p.55
Cf. The Institutes - p.538, 3:1:1.

4 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - p.367.

5 - Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians - p.125.

Initially then, Candlish's main point is, that by the act of regeneration we are united to Christ, and that this work of regeneration is the exclusive work and the main function of the Holy Spirit. Candlish also links up very carefully regeneration with sonship. It is by the new birth through the Spirit that we come sons of God:

"Born of God we occupy the very filial position that he who is the only-begotten Son occupies."¹

And in the same work, he writes:

"For the Holy Ghost makes you really one with the Son of God, so that abiding in him, you partake of his sonship; his filial relation to the Father...And the Holy Ghost also implants in you and puts within you the seed of God, the germ of God's own nature and God's own life, so that you are in very truth born of God."²

And again:

"It is not said merely that we are called his sons, as having him standing to us in the relation of a Father; but that we are called his children; his divinely-born children; deriving from a divine birth a divine nature; children of God, in respect of our being born of God."³

Candlish also emphasizes the fact that this work of regeneration by which we become sons through union with Christ, is from first to last a work of God.

He would have agreed with Calvin when he wrote:

"...our regeneration is entirely and without exception from God. There is no reason why we should claim an ounce of good works for ourselves."⁴

For Candlish as for Calvin, our regeneration is purely a work of grace, with no suggestion that faith is a kind of work that effectualizes our union to Christ together with the work of regeneration. All notion of "co-operating

1 - The Epistle of John - p.384.

2 - Op. cit. - p.272.

3 - Op. cit. - p.228 - Cf. the footnote on same page where Candlish gives exegetical evidence for his opinion.

4 - Institutes of the Christian Religion - pp.795-6, 3:16:7

grace" is rigidly excluded from Candlish's teaching on regeneration. In his teaching on regeneration, Candlish makes much of the analogy between Christ's birth in His Incarnation, and our new birth through regeneration. Indeed, this is surely one of Candlish's most original and significant contributions to the whole modern debate on the relation between Incarnation and Atonement. This analogy between Christ's birth and our rebirth is not perhaps entirely original in Candlish. Irenaeus had interpreted 1st John 5:18 in terms of this analogy,¹ and it is certain that Candlish was greatly influenced by the teaching of Irenaeus,² though it is not clear whether Candlish knew of the Father's interpretation of 1st John 5:8. A reviewer of Candlish's Cunningham Lectures writes:

"We confess that we have..confidence in contemplating the analogy between the works of the Spirit in generating his people, and in effecting the Incarnation of the Son...Thus by Incarnation on his side and Regeneration on ours, the gulf of separation is bridged over wholly.."³

This teaching which is so central to Candlish's thought, and so frequently found in all his theological writings, is, naturally enough, expounded at great length in his expository commentary on the First Epistle of John, from which we take a few typical references - references which could be almost endlessly multiplied:

"You who believe are born of God as he is. I speak of his human birth; in which you, in your new birth, are partakers with him; the same Spirit of God being the agent in both, and originating in both the same new life. His birth was humiliation to him, though it was of God; your new birth is exaltation to you, because it is of God. His being born of God by the Spirit made him partaker of your human nature; - your being born again of God by the Spirit makes you partakers of his "divine nature."⁴ "He was made man not by a mere

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- 1 - I owe this insight to Professor T. F. Torrance's Lectures on Christology and Soteriology in New College, Edinburgh.
 - 2 - Irenaeus' works were not translated into English until 1868-9 but Candlish was proficient enough in Latin to have been offered an assistantship in Latin at Glasgow University. See: Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish, D.D. p.40.
 - 3 - The British & For. Evangelical Review - 1865 - pp.774 & 775
 - 4 - The First Epistle of John - p.220.

creative act as Adam was, but by generation; being "conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost." So also in us the new creation is a new birth. When the Holy Ghost makes us new creatures, we are "begotten of God;" "his seed is in us," the divine germ of a new nature and a new life."¹ "In our divine regeneration he brings us to be, - what, through his interposition, Jesus Christ in his miraculous human generation became, - servants under the yoke; subject to the same authority and commandment of God; willingly subject; our nature being renewed into the likeness of his."²

In two volumes particularly, Candlish carefully examines first, the birth of Christ, followed by the new birth of the believer, drawing out the analogy between them together with some important conclusions:

"..first, let us consider the manner of his holy birth. Let us remember what work was needed to secure that his human nature, from the moment he assumed it, should be pure and perfect in holiness, so as to be in exact and complete harmony with his divine nature; a work of the Holy Ghost preparing for him a body, an immaculate human nature in the virgin's womb. That was the beginning of his holiness as man, the man Christ Jesus; his being thus born of the Spirit. And may not we, when we are born of the Spirit, be truly said to have union and communion with Christ in his being born of the Spirit? The same divine agent deals with the same human subject for the same holy end. He originates a holy human nature in the one case; he makes a corrupt human nature holy in the other case. So in our new birth, which is the beginning of our holiness, we have union and communion with Christ in his holy birth."³

And in The Fatherhood of God, he says:

"What is it that constitutes Jesus, in and from his human birth, the Son of God?...what is it about his human birth that prevents it...from clashing with his sonship, and secures that...his sonship shall continue identically the same, notwithstanding his change of state? Is it not the agency of the Holy Ghost in the production of his holy human nature?"⁴..... Now, if it was necessary that the Holy Ghost should thus fashion and mould the human nature of Christ....much more are the good offices of the same gracious Spirit needed for human nature as it is in us, if we are to have a share in that relation....In his case it was simply a birth that the Holy Spirit had to effect; in ours it is a new birth....In us he finds manhood so

1 - Op. cit. - p.453.

2 - Op. cit. - p.356.

3 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - pp.48-49.

4 - The Fatherhood of God - p.142.

marred and corrupted that it requires to be, in a sense, unmade that it may be made over again anew....That is the work of the Spirit in regeneration. Is it not a work corresponding closely to his agency in the human birth of Christ? He generated Christ's humanity that he might continue to be the Son. He regenerates our humanity that we may become sons."1

And in a volume of sermons, Candlish writes:

"God calls you unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ, in his birth. Your new birth is your fellowship, your participation with Christ in his birth...For it is by the same Spirit by whom he was born that you are born again...Thus faithfully does God deal with you when he makes you one with his Son, Jesus Christ, in his wondrous birth."2

Thus for Candlish there is the closest possible analogy between Christ's birth and our new birth. In the first place, the agency is the same - the Holy Spirit. Second, just as the Spirit keeps Christ immune from the taint of sin at His birth, so in like manner, the same Spirit cleanses us in our regeneration, making us to be partaker's of the Son's divine nature. Third, the Spirit enables the Son to become a servant, even as the same Spirit enables us servants to become sons. From all this Candlish draws the surely logical conclusion that the transformation of the Son effected by the Spirit at His Incarnation is the cause of our transformation by the Spirit in our regeneration, all of which is admirably summed up in a notable exposition by Candlish where he says:

"How close the analogy is, how intimate and vital the connection between Christ's being transformed by a body being prepared for him... and our being transformed..... In the first place the agency is the same - the agency of the Holy Ghost. It is he alone who can make the Son partaker of our human nature really - and yet without making him to be as fallen man. It is he alone who can make us partakers of the Son's divine nature, really - and yet without making us to be as God. Born of the Spirit, the Son comes into the world, one with us indeed in nature, yet not involved in our natural vileness. Born again of the same Spirit we enter into the Kingdom of God, one

1 - Op. cit. - pp.143-145.

2 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - pp.295-296.

with the Son indeed in nature, yet not exalted or aspiring to his essential majesty..... Thus on the part of Christ his supernatural birth by the power of the Holy Ghost, secures his exemption and immunity from all participation in what sinks and degrades our nature... And so also our being supernaturally born of the Spirit, provides for our being partakers of the divine nature of the Son without intruding into that essential divinity which is..the prerogative of..only God..... In the second place these two operations of the Spirit admirably fit into one another: the one effecting that supernatural birth by which the Son becomes a servant; the other, that supernatural new birth by which the servants become sons. The new creation by which the Son becomes partaker of our human nature, has for its counterpart the new creation by which we become partakers of his divine nature. The one transformation is the cause of the other...being that by means of which the other is wrought. But for the Son being transformed into our likeness, we could never have been transformed into his....the transformation in either case is a union. His being transformed, is His being united by a new creation to us. Our being transformed, is our being united by a new creation to Him. The Spirit making him one, in his birth with us. The same Spirit also makes us one in our new birth with him."¹

Nowhere, then, in Candlish's theology, is the importance of the Incarnation more central than in the analogy between Christ's birth and our new birth.

And nowhere, we venture to suggest, in Candlish's theology, would modern theology find more food for thought, and help in solving the dilemma in relating the Incarnation to the Atonement, than in Candlish's helpful exposition on the analogy between the birth of Christ and the new birth of the believer.

c) This Union is also Effected by God's Gracious Act of Adoption

For Candlish then, sonship is communicated to believers through their union with Christ by the Spirit's work of regeneration. The union, however, is not effected by regeneration alone. It is "both by adoption and regeneration."

Writing on Candlish's teaching about sonship. Rainy says:

1 - The Two Great Commandments: Illustrated in a Series of Discourses on the 12th Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans - R. S. Candlish - pp.63-65.

"We men, by adoption, and through union to Christ, enter into Sonship which is His essentially."¹

Candlish himself, stresses the necessity for both adoption and regeneration to effect our union when he writes:

"...it is not enough to make out a capacity of sonship, or a fitness for sonship, in the human nature of the Son as generated - and in that of his disciples as regenerated - by the Holy Ghost. There must be an express act of the Father declaring or constituting the relation."²

Candlish saw, and clearly set forth the fact that there are two aspects of our union with Christ, both of which are absolutely essential to the communication of the believer's sonship. There is, in the first place, "grace subjective," which is the grace of regeneration. But for the complete sonship there must also be "grace relational", or the grace of adoption. Put in other words, our union with Christ, and therefore our sonship, would be incomplete if it was effected only through regeneration. Candlish states the problem as follows:

"Even if, subjectively, an inward renewal and regeneration of their natures might be effected, would that suffice for so righting, objectively their standing in God's sight as to ensure legitimately ...their sonship?"³

For Candlish the answer is assuredly, 'No.' Indeed, "there must be an express act of the Father declaring..the relation. And that "express act"

"is the act of free and gracious adoption... The act of adoption... confers sonship.....on those who are originally nothing more than creatures and subjects...it constitutes the sonship itself. It is a pure and simple act of the free grace of God."⁴

Our sonship demands both adoption and regeneration. As one critic observed:

1 - Memorials of R. S. Candlish, D.D. - W. Wilson - p.617.

2 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - p.145.

3 - Op. cit. - p.145.

4 - Op. cit. - p.146.

"Adoption is a sovereign act of the divine grace, placing the believer in a new relative position towards God. But the complete ~~Union~~ carries in it the communication of grace subjective as well as grace relational...."¹

The relationship into which we are adopted, as Candlish tirelessly insists, is that of real sonship with the Father - sonship such as is enjoyed by Him who is characterized as the only-begotten Son. Candlish will settle for nothing less than this. For him, adoption is nothing less than union and communion with Christ in His own blessed sonship:

"Do not tell me, then, that my adoption is simply my being admitted into the divine family, so as to be called, in some vague and indeterminate sense, a child of God, and to have a right to call God Father, on the ground generally of what Christ has done and suffered as Redeemer. I care comparatively little for the privilege, if it is bestowed upon me in that manner. It is as being one with himself, that I would have this sonship. And if I have it as being one with him, it must be his own very sonship that I have."²

And in the same book, Candlish writes:

"I come now to adoption. And...I cannot see how it can be otherwise defined...than as being union and communion with Christ in his sonship...."³

In his doctrine of adoption, Candlish was a true expounder of the doctrine as understood in the Reformed Church, particularly as expounded by Calvin. Indeed, one reviewer makes so bold as to say that Calvin

"held the positive doctrine of Dr. Candlish's lectures"⁴

which "positive doctrine" is adoption. It is true that while Calvin has no chapter heading on adoption in The Institutes, nevertheless adoption holds a relatively important place in his scheme of doctrine.

"Who would break forth into such rashness as to claim for himself the honor of a son of God unless we had been adopted as children of grace in Christ? He, while he is the true Son, has

1 - British & Foreign Evangelical Review - p.771.

2 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - p.56.

3 - Op. cit. - p.54.

4 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1865 - p.725.

of himself been given us as a brother that what he has of his own by nature may become ours by benefit of adoption...."¹

And again:

"Therefore if one seeks the first cause that opens for the saints the door to God's Kingdom, and hence gives them a permanent standing-ground in it, at once we answer: Because the Lord by his own mercy has adopted them once and for all, and keeps them continually."²

And who can fail to hear the voice of Candlish as well as the teaching of Calvin from this quotation:

"Yet this ought to be unwaveringly maintained: to neither angels nor men was God ever Father, except with regard to his only-begotten Son; and men, especially hateful to God because of their iniquity, become God's sons by free adoption because Christ is the Son of God by nature....they could not actually be sons of God unless their adoption was founded upon the Head."³

Candlish taught that before we can receive the adoption of sons, it is necessary that we be first justified. Indeed, he teaches that Christ Himself

"was not declared to be 'the Son of God with power' till 'his resurrection from the dead...' He must first be himself justified, through his fulfilling all the righteousness which he became bound on our account to fulfil, and expiating all the guilt which he consented on our account to answer for.... When the case is that of creatures and subjects who are to be raised to the position of sons, a similar preliminary procedure of law would seem to be.... indispensable.... Their relation to God as subjects must first be put upon a right and satisfactory footing before they can become sons.... So long as men are in a state of guilt and condemnation under the righteous sentence of the law, they cannot be regarded as fit subjects for becoming the sons of God..... That is the precise obstacle which...must be got out of the way. And it is removed in his justification. Faith, uniting him to Christ, and making Christ and Christ's righteousness his, secures his being absolved from guilt and accounted righteous. He is now rectus in curiâ, a free subject, and therefore capable of sonship."⁴

In regarding justification as union and communion with Christ in his righteousness,

1 - The Institutes of the Christian Religion - J. Calvin - p.899 - 3:20:36.

2 - Op. cit. - p.809, 3:17:6.

3 - Op. cit. - p.488, 2:14:5 & cf. p.555, 732, & 900.

4 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - pp.146-150.

and adoption as union and communion with Christ in his sonship, it will be seen that Candlish regarded these two doctrines as quite separate entities, though, of course very closely related. Candlish is quite adamant that

"adoption is a blessing distinct from justification,"¹

that adoption is

"not a mere adjunct or appendix to justification, but a separate, distinct, and peculiar privilege; the crown and consummation of our entire salvation."²

The tendency to regard adoption as a constituent part of justification was one that was widespread in Candlish's time. He regards the Westminster Confession as implying that this is so. Charles Hodge in his work on Systematic Theology implies that this is the view of Reformed Theology.

A. A. Hodge tells us in his Outlines of Theology, that

"Turretin makes adoption a constituent part of justification", that justification, in his view

"involves two things:- 1. The remission of the penalty due to their sins. 2. The endowing them with all the rights and relations which accrue from the positive fulfilment of the covenant of works by Christ in their behalf. This second constituent of justification he calls adoption; which essentially agrees with the definition of adoption given in our Confession of Faith."³

Candlish was fully aware that the Confession of Faith, together with many theologians in the Reformed camp, regarded adoption as the "second constituent of justification," but it was an opinion from which he heartily dissented:

"..this relation of sonship, as shared by the Son with his disciples, has suffered.....seriously from so many of our theologians having failed to recognise sufficiently its entire distinction and separation from justification. The two have, to a large extent, been confounded and mixed up together. What God

1 - Reply to Professor Crawford - p.lxxxvi.

2 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - p.59.

3 - Outlines of Theology - A. A. Hodge - Edited by W. H. Gould pp.404-405. London: T. Nelson & Sons: 1877.

does in the act of adoption has been so represented as to make it either a part of what he does in the act of justification, or a mere appendage and necessary corollary involved in that act."¹

This ought not to be interpreted as meaning that Candlish was more interested in sonship, or adoption, than he was in justification, or that he regarded adoption as much more important than justification. For Candlish, justification was absolutely crucial in the Christian scheme of things. Furthermore, it was not, in his view a mere legal fiction, but

"in virtue of our real union to Christ by faith...a real transaction", in which, "As made one with Christ personally, by the Spirit working in me appropriating and uniting faith, I am really and truly one with him in his absolution from my guilt which he took upon himself, and in his being accepted as righteous on account of his "obedience unto death" for me. I state thus as broadly and strongly as I can the great Reformation doctrine. For I would not lower justification in order to exalt adoption. On the contrary, the higher any one raises the privilege of justification, the better for my view; since I hold adoption to be a privilege higher still. It is the admission of a person thoroughly justified, as being really one with the Father's righteous Servant, to fellowship with him with whom he is one, in his higher position, as the Father's only-begotten and well-beloved Son."²

Candlish puts forward another - and for him more important - reason for keeping adoption and justification separate. On the one hand we are dealing - in the case of justification - with a procedure that is thoroughly forensic in character; on the other - in the case of adoption - we are dealing with a procedure which,

"as used in the Scriptures, does not appear to convey the idea of a mere forensic act."³

For Candlish, the forensic character of justification is all-important:

"The more strictly we attach the character of a legal and judicial procedure to the act of God in justification, so much the better..." indeed, "it is only when we recognise its

1 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - p.158.

2 - Op. cit. - pp.159-160.

3 - Outlines of Theology - A. A. Hodge - p.405.

strictly forensic character that the real grace of the act appears."¹

But his conclusion is:

"All the more, however, on that very account it seems desirable to extricate adoption out of its entanglement with justification, and to recognise it as having a place and character of its own....not in any proper sense forensic at all."²

So important is this for Candlish, he can say:

"I think it is of as much consequence to maintain the thoroughly unforensic character of God's act in adoption, as it is to maintain the strictly forensic character of his act in justifying.....I look upon God as in adoption giving full and unrestrained vent to the pure fatherly love which he has for his own dear son; pouring it out upon him so lavishly that it overflows upon all that are his. There is nothing in his fatherhood or in his fatherly treatment of his Son that savours of the legal, the judicial, the forensic."³

Of course, it is important for Candlish, that

"the right balance and adjustment between our justification as subjects and our adoption as sons is maintained. For I need scarcely say that though they are to be distinguished, these two are not to be disjoined....They are simultaneous states, to be realised continually as such."⁴

For Candlish then, our justification is grounded upon the work of Christ for us as subjects, whereby He is accepted in our place as righteous by the Father on the ground of His "obedience unto death;" whereas our adoption is grounded upon the fact of Christ's eternal Sonship which we share through our union with him. In the first instance, we are dealing with an act that is forensic to the core - the act of justification. In the second, we are concerned with an act that does not "savour of the legal, the judicial, the forensic," - namely, adoption. The reviewer of the Cunningham Lectures

1 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - pp.160-161.

2 - Op. cit. - p.162.

3 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - p.163.

4 - Op. cit. - p.163.

recognises this clearly in his critical appraisal of Candlish:

"For sonship does not belong to the department of law and moral government at all, but to a department wholly distinct, which carries in it nothing corresponding to substitution and imputation"¹

as is the case in our justification. And in another passage, the same writer says:

"...adoption...was not founded upon redemption, or Christ's obedience, but on Christ's personally being God's natural Son. Our justification indeed is built upon his obedience and suffering. But our adoption is through his being the natural Son of God, and we his brethren in relation to his person."²

Candlish's views on the relationship between adoption and justification were not given a hospitable reception everywhere, no doubt, largely due to the fact that his teaching at this point differed from that of the Confession of Faith. But even though attacked by men like Professor Crawford for his views, Candlish still insisted that:

"Justification is acquittal, in terms of law, and on the ground of a legal righteousness. Adoption...is in its nature an extra-legal procedure, with which jurisprudence has nothing to do."³

d) Adoption in Reformed and Scottish Theology

The doctrine of adoption is one that is prominent in the New Testament Scriptures. It is especially so in the First Epistle of John, but it is to the Apostle Paul we must look for the fullest and most mature teaching on this subject. Such passages as Galatians 3:26 - 4:7, and the whole of Romans chapter eight, lay great emphasis upon the sonship of believers. Thus it may come as something of a surprise to learn that this important Biblical teaching had been almost totally neglected for long centuries in the Church's life, and that even with the coming of the Reformation, much

1 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - p.779.

2 - Op. cit. - p.780.

3 - Reply to Professor Crawford - p.xlviii.

was still needing to be done to redress the balance. This was a situation of which Candlish was very much aware.

"I cannot", he writes in one place, "divest myself of the impression that the subject (of adoption) has not hitherto been adequately treated in the Church."¹

This neglect of so important a doctrine is raised in a footnote by the reviewer of Candlish's Cunningham Lectures:

"Why has the subject of Adoption..been so little investigated and illustrated? It belongs to the category of relative grace, and forms the...complement...of Justification by faith. On justification by faith we have abundant and most precious authorship; for around that doctrine and privilege the...controversy as to relative grace has raged..Ought it not...to commend the subject of adoption, that it may be treated apart from controversy? Certain it is, however, that a good treatise on Adoption - such as should..do justice to the fine theology of the question.. is a desideratum." - Christ's Presence in the Gospel History, p.80.2.

The failure to consider, and adequately to develop along satisfactory lines, the doctrine of adoption, can be traced back to the early Fathers of the Church. No doubt it can be plausibly argued, that the Fathers were pre-occupied with questions of greater weight - questions of real grace, rather than questions about relative grace - questions such as the true nature of the Word made flesh, or the relations of the Trinity within the Godhead. Be that as it may, there can be no doubting the fact that in the Fathers - both Nicene and ante-Nicene - the question of the sonship of believing men is quite neglected. All of this Candlish fully realised when he says:

"...the patristic literature shows too plainly how the controversies about the supreme divinity of the Son tended to draw men's minds away from sonship."³

Similarly the reviewer of The Fatherhood of God notes that:

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- 1 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - p.193.
 - 2 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1865, footnote on page 722.
 - 3 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - p.193.

"The theology of the Nicene and ante-Nicene fathers was occupied with the questions of the Trinity and of the person of Christ."¹

Nor was the question of adoption taken up with anything like the seriousness that justification by faith was. Candlish frequently expresses his disappointment in the theology of the Reformation in this respect:

"The more I think of it", he says, "the more I am disposed to regret that the subject of adoption, or the sonship of believers, has been so little made account of in our Reformation theology."²

Indeed, Candlish seems to think that conceivably the reason why

"the lapse of the theology of the Reformation...as well as among ourselves, first into rigid and frigid scholastic systematising, and then into rationalism" is simply because we have failed to "do full justice to the common sonship of Christ and of Christ's disciples...giving it a well-defined place of its own."³

Of course it ought to be noted that in Reformation theology we do have a change of emphasis. No longer is it purely a matter of dealing with real grace to the complete neglect of relative grace:

"...hence, historically, it has happened that the theologians of the Reformation, to whose hands for the first time this topic, as one of grace relational, did so naturally lie, were, through great and urgent pre-occupation, ..naturally indisposed towards fully...dealing with it."..."And when the great question of man's relation to God through grace...came to be so intensely discussed... between the great theologians of the Reformation and the Church of Rome, every one knows that the platform of the contest was... justification by faith alone."⁴

No doubt Candlish understood this: He saw clearly that the urgent task presenting itself to the Reformers was the question of: How can a man be justified before God? This realisation tempered somewhat, Candlish's criticism of the Reformer's failure to deal adequately with the sonship of believers:

1 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1865 - p.725.

2 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - p.xxxi.

3 - Op. cit. - p.167.

4 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1865 - p.725.

"The Reformers had enough to do to vindicate "the article of a standing or falling church" - justification by faith alone....to reassert it in its right connection with the doctrine of the absolute Divine Sovereignty....Their hands were full. It need not be matter of surprise that in their case....there should have been lines of theological inquiry on which they scarcely at all entered."¹

Candlish acknowledges that his criticisms of the Reformers anent their failure to discuss adoption, does not apply to the same extent to Calvin, from whom Candlish undoubtedly learned something on the subject of the sonship of believers. He is obviously disappointed in the fact that

"in his Institutes Calvin does not formally discuss the subject of adoption", however, he goes on to say: "But two things are to be noted as to his teaching about it. In the first place, in describing with very considerable fulness the original state of man as made in the image of God...Calvin makes no reference whatever to sonship as forming any part of his constitution or any element in his standing. There is no hint of anything like a filial relationin a position of probation under authority and law...And in the second place, whenever he speaks of redemption, Calvin brings in the idea of sonship; and he invariably connects it with the sonship of Christ.."²

However, on the whole, his conclusions are as follows:

"...it has fared somewhat ill with the truth as regards God's fatherhood and his people's sonship at both eras - both in the primitive Church and in the Church of the Reformation."³

Candlish also believed - and surely rightly - that the same gap in doctrine was to be found in the great creeds and confessions of the Reformed Church:

"The creeds and confessions of the Protestant and Reformed churches, as well as the theological systems of their colleges, are..extremely meagre in what they say on the subject. In some it is not even noticed; in others it is made a part of justification, or a mere appendix to it; in none..does it receive sufficiently full..treatment."⁴

1 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - p.192.

2 - Reply to Professor Crawford - p.cxxv

3 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - p.192.

4 - Op. cit. - p.193.

This failure to do justice to adoption, was particularly criticized by Candlish with respect to the Westminster Standards:

"Take our own..Confession and Catechisms. I never have had any scruple to affirm that their statements on the subject of adoption are by no means satisfactory...The answer in the Shorter Catechism is really, in substance, scarcely anything more than that adoption is adoption. In the other documents, the matter is handled more fully, and some of the privileges of the children of God are enumerated. Still even in them the whole matter is left in the last degree vague and indefinite. And no information whatever is given, nor is any opinion expressed as to how the relation of sonship is constituted, or as to what its precise nature is, viewed in the light of the incarnation."¹

Candlish goes on to note that it is a very different matter indeed with other doctrines, such as the doctrine of redemption:

"The contrast is very remarkable, in this respect, between their treatment of the subject of adoption, and their treatment of all other topics connected with the purchase and application of redemption.....I hold them,..to have virtually left the whole of that department of theology which bears on God's paternal relation to his people, and their filial relation to him, to a large extent an open question.."²

This same view is shared by a friendly critic of Candlish, who writes:

"The Westminster Standards..do face the question of Adoption... But as to any scientifically theological treatment of the doctrine, such as they have so conclusively and exhaustively bestowed on the question of Justification by faith...there is here a very remarkable contrast. Of the ground or grounds of this privilege and relation we find in them absolutely nothing, save the vaguest and most general reference..to the person of Christ...Of God's procedure in constituting the relation, they leave us in complete ignorance. On the believer's action in apprehending it, they are equally silent. Of the connection between adoption and regeneration, they tell us nothing. As to what relation or connection subsists between the Sonship of Christ and the sonship of his people, they do not even raise the topic."³

1 - Op. cit. - p.194.

2 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - p.195.

3 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1865 - p.724.

When we turn to the great systematic theologians and their treatises on theology, we find the same scant attention to adoption. In Germany, for example, one looks in vain in such works as Harnack's History of Dogma, Dorner's System of Christian Doctrine, and Hagenbach's History of Doctrines for any clear exposition of the sonship of believers. In point of fact, there is not even one reference to the subject in any of the indexes of the three works. The great systematic theologians of the United States roughly contemporary with Candlish, fare no better. In Charles Hodge massive three-volume work, entitled, Systematic Theology, the subject is wholly ignored; and

"In the voluminous writings of Jonathan Edwards, there is neither treatise, chapter, sermon, nor section on adoption;.."¹

And what is true of Germany and the United States, is also true of Scotland with respect to adoption. Chalmers in his work, ², has nothing whatsoever to say about our sonship. Principal George Hill, whose Lectures on Divinity influenced Candlish so much in the direction of a doctrine of atonement, devotes a mere five sentences to adoption.³ And

"In Dr. Cunningham's Lectures on Historical Theology, the doctrine is not even broached - for the simple reason that it has no history to present."⁴

Candlish was severely criticized for his theological doctrines, especially his understanding of adoption. He was not surprised, of course, at being criticized and receiving

1 - Op. cit. - p.727.

2 - Institutes of Theology - 2 volumes.

3 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1865 - p.727.

4 - Op. cit. - p.728.

"the censure of that theological school which resolves redemption and regeneration into a simple recognition of our standing in the sightof God as being already all that is to be desired," but he did "confess however that I scarcely anticipated such sort of treatment from the opposite quarter."¹

By the "opposite quarter," Candlish was referring to those who stood in the Reformed tradition - such men as Professor T. J. Crawford, who was unduly severe on Candlish and his doctrine of the believers' sonship, accusing him of peddling "novel doctrines." Such was the accusation that Candlish felt constrained to answer,

"the studious endeavour..to create a prejudice from the outset by...proclaiming the alleged novelty of my views."²

When one remembers that the doctrine of adoption had never really been properly expounded, and that consequently there were no theological authorities whom one could quote on the subject; furthermore when one recalls that Candlish's teaching was a candid criticism of the Westminster Standards, one can readily see why his teaching would be labelled as "novel." Candlish, however, categorically denied any such "novelty" in his teaching on adoption. In answering Professor Crawford, he has this to say:

"In dealing with this allegation, it may be proper to explain in what sense and to what extent I disclaim it as unwarranted. Of course, if I had not thought that I might be enabled to throw some new light on the subject....at least in some respects of it, I never would have presumed to choose it. I did not aim at originality, far less at innovation; but it had occurred to me....there was still wanting something more in the way of orderly exposition than the Church possessed.... I was not, as I was well aware, following exactly in any beaten track, and could scarcely therefore expect to find formal and express confirmations of my successive statements ready at hand for quotation. I may say, however, that I never advanced any statement without being satisfied in my own mind that it was really in accordance with the opinions I had received from

1 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - p.xxix.

2 - Reply to Professor Crawford - p.xxi.

the teaching of the soundest divines. And though I did not care to encumber my book with an array of authoritative extractsI indicated in my preface the sort of backing which I claimed from the general consent of Christian authorship."¹

In spite of this disclaimer, reviewers continued to refer to his doctrine of adoption as being "novel."

"Dr. Candlish was led in the pursuit of this special object to bring the various statements as regards fatherhood into connection with the relation in which God stands to His eternal Son, and hence arises his ingenious and novel theory."²

But if the critics persevered in so calling his doctrine of adoption "novel," Candlish with no less persistence, categorically denied the charge, and resolutely resisted the accusation that his formulation of the doctrine of the sonship of believers was a departure from the Biblical and Reformed point of view:

"These are not" he writes in his book on The Fatherhood of God, "in my opinion, novel doctrines; I would be sorry to think that they were. I may have put some points more sharply, and pushed a certain line of thought more boldly, than some may be quite prepared to approve. I am persuaded that I have really advanced nothing which may not be found, if not categorically asserted, at least fairly implied, in the writings of orthodox and evangelical divines, both of earlier and later times."³

The truth is that Candlish was right when he insisted that his teaching on adoption was at least to be found in germinal form in the teaching of the Reformed theologians. His doctrine of the sonship of believers was only "novel" in the sense that it parted company with the Federal Scheme of theology - a theology which failed completely to see that our sonship takes its rise in Christ's sonship, and that our sonship comes to us not through the forensic doctrine of justification, but by way of Christ's own eternal Sonship. And it is because this Federal theology is enshrined to some extent in the West-

1 - Op. cit. - p.cviii - Cf. the whole of Note B on "Alleged Novelty of the Views advocated in the Lectures" - pp.cviii - cxv.

2 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1871 - p.305.

3 - The Fatherhood of God - pp.xv-xvi.

minster Standards, that these same standards fail to properly develop the doctrine of adoption, seeing it as a constituent part of justification, instead of seeing it in terms of the one eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ.

e) The Relationship between Justification, Regeneration, and Adoption

In his teaching on the sonship of believers, Candlish was at great pains to set down clearly the meaning of both regeneration and adoption. But he saw too, that these could only be seen in their true perspective, when they were seen in their relationship to one another, and in their relationship to the doctrine of justification. Furthermore, Candlish was fully persuaded that the relationship between justification, regeneration, and adoption needed clarification and re-statement. This was especially the case with respect to the Westminster Standards, where the relationship between justification, regeneration, and adoption was stated in such a way as to bring confusion. Thus Candlish advocated changing the order of adoption as it was in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and he gave as his

"...reasons...for changing the order in which the three benefits...are enumerated in our standards..... First, the change assigns to adoption its proper place, as not a mere adjunct..to justification, but a separate....privilege...For... as justification is union and communion with Christ in his righteousness, and sanctification is union and communion with Christ in his holiness, or his holy character and nature; so by parity of reason, adoption must be held to be union and communion with Christ in his sonship..... Then, secondly, by putting adoption last we bring out its right relation to the other two benefits. It is no mere corollary of justification; far less is it a preliminary condition or means of regeneration and sanctification. It is the joint result, through an exercise of sovereign grace, of the act of God in acquitting us of guilt and accepting us as righteous, and the work of God in renewing us to holiness. It is in virtue of our oneness with Christ and participation with him in his right standing before God, that we reach, in God's gracious act of adoption, oneness with Christ and participation with him in his filial oneness with the Father."¹

1 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - pp.59-60.

Candlish was thus anxious to have adoption regarded as a distinct and peculiar blessing, not to be confused with justification, or confounded with regeneration. Of course, while these three blessings are separate and distinct, nevertheless they are intimately connected to one another. Indeed, the fulness and completeness of the believer's union with Christ is only properly understood in terms of all three:

"..all the three together may be taken as constituting the one union and communion with Christ..at once gracious and glorious."¹

Thus the relationship between justification, regeneration, and adoption is seen initially, in the fact that each is closely associated with the believer's union with Christ - put in another way, each partakes of subjective or relative grace - and that the three blessings together constitute the believer's complete union with the Risen Lord. Candlish never wearied of emphasizing the fact that all the benefits of redemption come to us not so much through Christ as in Christ.

"It is not from Christ or through Christ that you have it, but in Christ. The condition of your having redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, is your being in Christ."²

Of course, Candlish never forgot that while

"our partaking of the benefits of Christ's redemption depends thus upon our having union and communion with Christ in them all,.. it is not so much the benefits that we are to be concerned about receiving, but rather Christ himself."³

In the Larger Catechism, question (65) reads:

"What special benefits do the members of the invisible Church enjoy by Christ?"

And the answer is that they

1 - Op. cit. - p.61.

2 - Ephesians - R. S. Candlish - p.29.

3 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - p.64.

"enjoy union and communion with him in grace and glory." For Candlish, "this covers and comprehends all; union inferring communion. It explains their justification, as being community of righteousness with him. It explains their regeneration and sanctification, as being community of nature with him. It explains their adoption, as being community of sonship with him."¹

In Candlish's view then, justification is "union and communion with Christ in His righteousness."

"Faith, justifying and saving faith, which is his own gift, unites us to his Son; so thoroughly unites us, in a real personal and living oneness, that we are accounted and treated as one;....Hence because he is righteous, we are righteous. We die with him; being crucified with him; and so in bearing and exhausting the condemnation. We rise with him to newness of life; to a new life of exemption from guilt and acception. Such is our justification."²

Here in this definition of justification we see that Candlish not only regards it as inexorably bound up with union with Christ, but that justification means for him, also, a Christological understanding of the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Our righteousness is no legal fiction, but a real righteousness effected through a real union with Christ. We have already pointed out that the act of justification is, for Candlish, a thoroughly forensic act, that "The more strictly we attach the character of a legal and judicial procedure to the act of God in justification, so much the better. "Indeed, Candlish maintained that the real grace of the act can only be seen when we recognise justification in its strictly forensic character:

"..only in proportion as its strictly forensic character is practically apprehended and realised, will its real grace be felt.... Strict law and judgment apart, - no reason can possibly be given for the interposition of the Son being required....It is only by adhering strictly to the legal and judicial character of the transaction - by viewing it as properly and literally forensic, both as regards God's treatment of Christ for us and as regards his

1 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - pp.196-197.

2 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - pp.103-104.

treatment of us in Christ - that we can see and appreciate the grace that there is in our justification. Then indeed, grace shines forth in it conspicuously - grace providing the substitute; grace accepting the substitute; grace making us one with the substitute; grace receiving us and dealing with us as one with the substitute. Thus, to conserve its gracious character, it is indispensably necessary to hold firm and fast the forensic character of justification."¹

Candlish, however, was very quick to point out that justification is never to be thought of simply as being negative. There is also an important positive element in the act of justification:

"...this privilege...of justification...In one aspect of it.. we may regard...as simply negative; undoing the effect of sin; cancelling its guilt, and reversing its doom. But...Not only does it remove an obstacle which must have been fatal to the accomplishment of God's purpose in calling us;....it means more.. than that. We are, when justified, brought into a position in which we can never again be treated as condemned criminals..and can never again come under the judicial sentence of death for sin."²

And in his exposition of Ephesians, he stresses the same truth:

"When God raised him up by his exceeding great power, the act, in the eye of the law, meant more than the removal of the penal sentence of death which he had endured and exhausted. It implied a positive acknowledgement of him as the obedient servant. It was the owning of his perfect and finished righteousness. It was his justification. And it is yours in him. For you are raised up together. Not merely, negatively, is the sentence of that death removed from you; but positively, a new sentence of life is passed upon you. You live anew in Christ. Raised up together with him, you are welcomed by God, his Father and your Father,..as having not only the same deliverance from death, but the very same title to life, in the favour and fellowship of God, which, as your representative, Christ has made good for himself and you together."³

In the above quotation, Candlish is also making the point that our justification is not only contingent upon Christ's atoning death, but also upon His resurrection from the death. This is certainly, he felt, the view of

1 - The Fatherhood of God - pp.161-162.

2 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - pp.127-128.

3 - Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians - p.5.

Paul the apostle:

"Evidently, according to the apostle's judgment, if there is no resurrection there is no justification."¹

If justification is our union and communion with Christ in his righteousness, regeneration, for Candlish, is "union and communion with Christ in his holiness or nature." And this union and communion with Christ in his holiness or nature is "in virtue

"in virtue of my participation, in my new birth, with him in his birth."²

This analogy between Christ's birth and our new birth lies at the heart of Candlish's teaching on regeneration. In the case of Christ's birth, the Spirit originates a holy human nature; in the case of the believer, the same Spirit "makes a corrupt human nature holy."

"So in our new birth, which is the beginning of our holiness, we have union and communion with Christ in his holy birth."³

Such, argues Candlish, is the unequivocal teaching of the First Epistle of John:

"...John attaches a very deep meaning indeed to our being born of God; that he looks upon it as in some real and vital sense analogous - not merely to the relation of the human child to the human parent - but to the act in which the relation originates; that he regards it as actually effecting a certain community of nature between God and man."⁴

Thus, in our regeneration, we have union and communion with Christ in his holy nature because

"it is by the same Spirit by whom he was born that you are born again."⁵

1 - Life in a Risen Saviour - R. S. Candlish - p.122.

2 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - p.53.

3 - Op. cit. - p.49.

4 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - p.154.

5 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - p.295

Finally, in adoption, Candlish believes we have "union and communion with Christ in His sonship." This, for Candlish, is the plain unadorned teaching of the New Testament. In Romans 8:28-29, he sees

"a strong assertion of their actual participation with the Son in his own very sonship."¹

Indeed, Candlish sees our adoption, our union and communion with Christ in His sonship as the object of our redemption, as the climax of our salvation. The ultimate object of God's calling, according to Paul in Romans 8:29, is that

"his Son..might be the firstborn among many brethren."

in order that believers might be

"conformed to the image of his Son."

And so, Candlish concludes, we are:

"Called as sinners - justified as subjects - glorified as sons; so runs the climax."²

Candlish keeps coming back to this passage in his exposition of adoption, and there is no doubt whatsoever, that he came to understand and appreciate the Pauline teaching here from his study of Treffry. Treffry, when commenting on this passage writes:

"That, therefore, which especially and in the highest sense makes the faithful one with Christ, is their assimilation to him. They sustain one and the same relative character, the filiation of Christ being the real and archetypal; the filiation of the saint that modelled upon it. Thus does St. Paul represent the elect as predestined to be "conformed to the IMAGE OF THE SON of God, that he, "the Eternal Son, "might be the FIRST-BORN," possessing all the rights and dignities of primo-geniture, among many BRETHREN."³

"Our adoption is there represented as being, in the order of the divine decrees, a more immediate end in the divine view in predestination than our redemption. Redemption is decreed as a necessary means, but not the end."⁴

1 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - p.157.

2 - The Fatherhood of God - R. S. Candlish - p.186.

3 - An Inquiry into the Doctrine of the Eternal Sonship of Our Lord Jesus Christ - Richard Treffry, Jun. - Third Edition. London: John Mason: 1849.

4 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review - 1865 - pp.780-781.

Indeed, the end of our predestination is our participation in His sonship with the Son Himself. The object of our redemption is our union and communion with Christ in His sonship.

Thus, for Candlish, the climax of our salvation lies in our being adopted as sons in Christ. And our sonship is to be found in the Sonship of our Living Head. For

"We have absolutely nothing whatever - subordinately, we mean of course, to the sovereign grace of God - nothing whatever to fall back upon for sonship but the Sonship of our living head....His redemption, strictly and properly conceived of, has achieved nothing of this sort for us. For, perfect in its action and its fruits, its fruits are confined to the sphere in which its action takes place the sphere of government by law, the sphere of legal and forensic procedure. For all that pertains to the sphere of Fatherhood and Sonship we must look not to Christ's work but Christ's person exclusively....We are called into communion with him, under express consideration that he is the Son."¹

Candlish would have set his seal of approval on these words written by a reviewer of one of his volumes:

"We stand for an adoption enjoyed by communion...joint possession, with him in some Sonship that is his own, just as we stand for deliverance from death through communion with Christ in his own death, and for justification before the Divine Judge through communion with Christ in his own righteousness and his own justification thereby."²

For Candlish then, it is vitally important that we understand justification, regeneration, and adoption as separate blessings, which, together, constitute the believer's union with Christ. And viewing adoption as he did, as the climax of the believer's union, we can understand why he wishes to alter the order in the Westminster Confession of Faith which led to a confusion between the act of justification and the act of adoption. But while the three blessings must be seen as distinct benefits, they must also be seen in their intimate

1 - Op. cit. - p.781.

2 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review, 1865 - p.785.

relationships, especially in the manner in which each is related to the other through union with Christ.

For Candlish then, the doctrine of union with Christ was absolutely central.

In statement after statement we have tried to show how he emphasized that our salvation stems from our union with Christ.

"In this oneness, all saving benefits reach me. There is no such things as any one of them coming to me from Christ; I have them all only in Christ; in union and communion with him."¹

"All the good we get through Christ comes through our being one with him."²

In stressing that all Christ's benefits stem from our union with Him, Candlish was, of course, teaching that justification flows from our union with our Redeemer. In so doing, he was adhering to the teaching of Calvin, who in writing about justification, had this to say:

"...I confess that we are deprived of this utterly incomparable good until Christ is made ours. Therefore, that joining together of Head and members, that indwelling of Christ in our hearts - in short, that mystical union - are accorded by us the highest degree of importance, so that Christ, having been made ours, makes us sharers with him in the gifts with which he has been endowed. We do not, therefore, contemplate him outside ourselves from afar in order that his righteousness may be imputed to us, but because we put on Christ and are engrafted into his body - in short, because he deigns to make us one with him."³

It is necessary, however, at this juncture, to point out that in his teaching concerning union with Christ, Candlish was not always consistent. He teaches, for example, that before we can receive the adoption of sons we must first be justified. He can write that adoption is

"a separate...privilege; the crown and consummation of our entire salvation."⁴

1 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - p.55.

2 - Op. cit. - p.54.

3 - The Institutes - pp.736-737, 3:11:10.

4 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - p.59.

And in another passage, he writes that we are

"Called as sinners - justified as subjects - glorified as sons."¹

In each of these instances, the implication is clearly that justification not only precedes adoption, but also that both justification and adoption precede our union with Christ.

Here Candlish was rejecting the Reformed position of men like Calvin who insist on the priority of union with Christ in the order of salvation, and reverting to the teaching of the Federal theology, found also in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Because of this defect in Candlish's teaching it is not surprising to find him making an inordinate stress on the forensic aspect of justification,² thus ignoring the fact that

"the forensic element in the atoning work of Christ rests upon the basis of His Incarnation, upon His Person and Human Life, and therefore that the forensic element in justification reposes for its substance and meaning upon union with Christ. It is through union with Him that we enter into the blessing of justification, because it was through His becoming one with us first in His Incarnation that Christ wrought our justification for us."³

It must be admitted, however, that the main emphasis in Candlish's theology is that union with Christ is prior to the benefits we receive from Him, and that justification, regeneration, and adoption flow from our union with Christ. However, as we have pointed out, there is this inconsistency in his teaching which would seem to indicate that Candlish had not quite rid himself of the influence of a Federal theology which taught that justification and indeed all the benefits of salvation are prior to our union with Christ.

1 - The Fatherhood of God - p.186.

2 - See, The Fatherhood of God - pp.160-163.

3 - The School of Faith - Edited by T. F. Torrance - p.cx.

In this main section of our thesis, we have been mainly concerned with Candlish's teaching regarding the Incarnation and the One Eternal Sonship of Christ, together with the Incarnation and that same Eternal Sonship as communicated to believers. Perhaps we can best sum up what we have been attempting to set forth in this section in the words of a friendly reviewer of one of Candlish's books, who wrote concerning Candlish's views on the Incarnation and the one Eternal Sonship:

"The great ruling idea.....is this:- that by the Incarnation and in the whole person of the God-man, the Eternal Sonship is revealed as embarked, and committed on the official covenant work of the last Adam, the Lord from Heaven - a Sonship on whose resources of knowledge the Prophet draws in revealing to us the Father; on whose resources of love and confidence he draws, when as a Priest he guides us to the Father's blood-sprinkled throne of grace; on whose resources of prerogative and dominion also he draws, when in his Kingly office he rules over us "as a Son over his own house" - his own house of brethren, co-sons and co-heirs with himself....it is an Eternal Sonship, deposited in human nature in his person, that wearers of the same nature mystically united to his person may have communion in it."¹

1 - The British & Foreign Evangelical Review, 1865 - p.786.

CHAPTER V

Presuppositions of the Atonement

a) Atonement Flows from the Love of God

In a volume on the Atonement, Professor J.G.Riddell has reminded us that the fact of the sovereignty of God in its relation to the Atonement, has often been misrepresented so as to give the impression that God is like an autocratic Eastern monarch acting

"from necessity or from regard to His own honour rather than from love."¹

However, warns Riddell, this caricature ought not to blind us to the truth that ultimately the Atonement does rest on the sovereignty of Almighty God.

"..we must remember that the sovereignty of God, awe-inspiring in its holiness and heart-searching in its righteousness, as well as omnipotent in love, is the final ground of our belief in the Atonement."²

To fail to realize this, argues Riddell, would result in a failure to set forth both the love of God and the Cross of Christ.

"All conceptions of the Atonement...which make the historical act of the crucifixion a more important and crucial thing than the vast, eternal self-donation of God which lies behind it, are not so much an obscuring of the loving Fatherhood of God as a spoilation of the very Cross they intend to exalt."³

Candlish would have found himself in ready agreement with such sentiments. It was his unshakeable belief that "the sovereignty of God..is the final ground of our belief in the Atonement." In speaking of the sovereignty of God, Candlish nowhere sets down in systematic form just exactly what he means by this doctrine. Nor is it clear that he always means the same thing when speaking of God's sovereignty. However, from his writings on the subject, it does emerge that he views God's sovereignty in terms of God's absolute right

¹ - Why Did Jesus Die? - J.G.Riddell - p.109, London: Hodder & Stoughton: 1938

² - Op.cit. - p.110

³ - Op. cit. - p. 78

"to govern and dispose of all his creatures simply according to his own good pleasure."¹

Thus sometimes Candlish regards the sovereignty of God in terms of God's omnipotence and power. In other places, following the teaching of Scripture, Candlish sees the sovereignty of God in terms of God ruling and directing all this according to the counsel of His own will, that is, in terms of God's moral government of the universe. But perhaps Candlish's greatest stress in his doctrine of the sovereignty of God is his emphasis on God's absolute freedom. This fact of God's sovereign freedom is stressed particularly by Candlish in his doctrine of the atonement, where he emphasizes that God exercises His sovereign freedom in the sending of His Son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins. Thus in linking the atonement with the sovereignty of God in this way, Candlish does justice to that aspect of God's sovereignty which Reformed theology seeks to stress, namely the absolute freedom of God in His sovereign actions. Standing in the tradition of the Reformed teaching, Candlish saw the atonement as having its origin in the sovereignty of God. Indeed he saw the sovereignty of God as the foundation of all Christian doctrine, a sovereignty which

"gives consistent unity to the whole...not however, as an abstract and speculative notion about God...but rather as a truth of practical application, gathered (a posteriori) out of those personal dealings of God with mankind generally, and with individual men..."²

Candlish was also of the opinion that it was chiefly the denial of the sovereignty of God that opened the door to much error in Christian doctrine.

".it may be said of every error, that, if traced to its ultimate source it will be found to take its rise in a denial of the doctrine which is the leading characteristic of the Westminster Standards - the doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of God."³

Writing on the Incarnation, Candlish says:

"You look at the great fact, first and chiefly in its relation to God, and as on the side of God. It is from God and for God that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh."⁴

1 - Outlines of Theology - A.A.Hodge - British Edition, T.Nelson & Sons: Edinburgh & New York: 1877 - p.130

2 - The Atonement - R.S. Candlish - p.40.

3 - Op.cit. - pp.39-40

4 - The First Epistle of John - R.S.Candlish - pp. 364-365

And in reference to Christ's Substitutionary death he writes:

"We believe it to be the gracious appointment of the sovereign will of God."¹

For Candlish then, atonement which includes incarnation, rests in the sovereignty of God. Candlish was undoubtedly convinced that one of the great gains of the Reformed theology was just this fact that it linked the atonement much more Biblically and much more definitely than before, with the sovereignty of the Triune God. Thus in writing about the Reformed Confessions he could say:

"The Atonement, as the method of reconciliation between God and man, was considered more than before in its connection with the divine purpose appointing it, and the divine power rendering it effectual. Redemption was viewed, not merely as a sort of general influence from above, telling on mankind collectively and universally; but as a specific plan, contemplating and securing the highest good of "such as should be saved." The sovereignty of God, carrying out his eternal decree, in the person and work of Christ, and in the personal work of the Spirit, was the ruling...idea."²

In emphasizing the sovereignty of God as the "final ground of our belief in the Atonement," Candlish was, of course indebted to John Calvin from whom he had learned this truth. In The Institutes, speaking of the mediatorship of Christ, Calvin writes:

"..it has stemmed from a heavenly decree, on which men's salvation depended."³

And in another passage he says:

"In discussing Christ's merit, we do not consider the beginning of merit to be in him, but we go back to God's ordinance, the first cause. For God solely of his own good pleasure appointed him Mediator to obtain salvation for us."⁴

But if Candlish is at great pains to link the sovereignty of God with the Atonement and demonstrate that ultimately such sovereignty is the "final ground of the Atonement," he is even more anxious, and stresses to an even greater degree,

1 - Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays - p.229

2 - The Atonement - R.S. Candlish - p.29

3 - The Institutes - John Calvin - p.464, 2:16:4

4 - Op. cit. - p.529, 2:17:1

the fact that the Atonement flows from the Love of God. Indeed, this is one of the chief presuppositions to Candlish's doctrine of the Atonement. That the Atonement does not procure love, but that it flows from the Father's love is a constant theme in Candlish's writings.

"The Son's work in redemption - his being lifted up - does not create love, being itself the fruit of love."¹

And again:

"We do not hold that Christ in any sense changed the will of the Father. We do not hold that the Atonement moved the Father to love the world, but that the Father so loved the world as to provide the Atonement."²

In his work on the Atonement, Candlish has this to say:

"For the idea of Christ purchasing benefits from the Father for mankind, must ever be so understood as to be in consistency with the Father's sovereignty, and especially in consistency with the Father's pre-existing love to the children of men. The Father is not induced or persuaded to bestow benefits on men by a price paid to him; but being antecedently full of compassion to all, and having a purpose to deliver many, he appoints and ordains....this death of his Son..."³

And speaking of the love of God in his work on the First Epistle of John, he writes:

"God sent his Son to manifest this love...God sent his only begotten Son into the world to give us a specimen..perhaps the only possible perfect specimen,... of "the love which is of God."⁴

In seeing the love of God as the mainspring of Atonement, and not as procuring Atonement, Candlish stood in the mainstream of Christian theology down through the ages. This is especially true of the Reformers, and contrary to an opinion that keeps cropping up periodically, that the Reformers regarded the Atonement as that which wins God's love, it must be asserted in the strongest possible terms that such an assertion is a caricaturing of the position of men like Luther and Calvin. James Orr reminds us that:

1 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - R.S.Candlish - p.5.

2 - Examination of Mr.Maurice's Theological Essays - p.229

3 - The Atonement - R.S.Candlish - p.192

4 - The First Epistle of John - p.382

"Luther...and his fellow-Reformers carefully guard themselves against the idea that God's original attitude to men was one of wrath, and that the Cross has changed this attitude into love."¹

In the Library of Christian Classics edition of Calvin's Institutes, the editors have entitled 2:16:4 of the Institutes,

"The work of atonement derives from God's love; therefore it has not established the latter."²

And it is interesting to note that in his argument that atonement flows from love, Calvin appeals to Augustine who also taught this. Says Calvin:

"I shall quote a passage of Augustine where the very thing is taught: 'God's love,' says he, 'is incomprehensible and unchangeable. For it was not after we were reconciled to him through the blood of his Son that he began to love us. Rather, he has loved us before the world was created, that we might also be his sons along with his only-begotten Son...The fact that we were reconciled through Christ's death must not be understood as if his Son reconciled us to him that he might now begin to love those whom he had hated. Rather, we have already been reconciled to him who loves us, with whom we were enemies on account of sin. The apostle will testify whether I am speaking the truth: 'God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.' (Rom.5:8)"³

Thus for Augustine and the Reformers it is true to say that they never lose sight of the fact that the cause of reconciliation is nothing other than the love of God. Or as James Orr put it:

"With them, as with Augustine, and the greater schoolmen, love is the spring of the whole redeeming counsel, and the grace of God in salvation is safeguarded by the fact that it is God Himself who provides the means of reconciliation."⁴

In thus emphasizing the atonement flowed from the love of God, Candlish did not make the mistake, so commonly made in the nineteenth century, of so stressing the love of God that all His other attributes or perfections were ignored. Professor Riddell raises this very question when he says:

1 - The Progress of Dogma - James Orr - p.238

2 - Institutes of the Christian Religion - p.506, 2:16:4

3 - Op.cit. - pp.506-507, 2:16:4

4 - The Progress of Dogma - James Orr - p.238

"Was the nineteenth century theology, which rendered such valuable service in directing men's minds to the love of God, right in its tendency to define His nature exclusively in terms of love?"¹

Riddell points out that men like McLeod Campbell were aware of the problems in defining the nature of God too narrowly, so that McLeod Campbell could write:

"The wrath of God against sin is a reality...nor is the idea that satisfaction was due to divine justice a delusion."²

In later times P.T. Forsyth was to register a similar protest against defining the nature of God too exclusively in terms of love. If God's nature were to be defined in terms of love, taught Forsyth, it must be in terms of "holy love." Candlish's recognition of the importance of the love of God, especially as the cause of atonement, never blinded him to the necessity of seeing also God's nature in terms of His holiness, His righteousness, and His justice. He would have agreed with

"B.B. Warfield's reminder: 'God is love'. But it does not in the least follow that He is nothing but love. God is love: but Love is not God and the formula "Love" must therefore ever be inadequate to express God."³

Candlish set forth his position in this matter again and again in his writings, as e.g. in this passage:

"Those who know best how to defend it never speak of any contest between the justice and the mercy of God, because they believe that there is the most perfect harmony amongst all the divine perfections; they never think so unworthily of God as to conceive that his fury was appeased by the interposition of Jesus Christ; but they uniformly represent the scheme of our redemption as originating in the love of God the Father, who both provided and accepted that substitution by which sinners are saved; and they hold that the forgiveness of sins is free... upon that consideration which the Lawgiver saw meet to exact."⁴

For Candlish God is love, that is primary; and the atonement flows from that love but because there is sin and judgement, because God is also a holy God, we must never overlook the justice of God:

1 - Why Did Jesus Die? - p.97

2 - Op.cit. - p.97

3 - Quoted in: The Cross in the New Testament - L.Morris - p.340

4 - The Atonement - R.S.Candlish - p.xfi

"it is an administrative government that God exercises, - a government embracing in it legislation, judicial procedure, a calling to account, awarding sentences; it is an authoritative law, with distinct sanctions annexed to it, that God promulgates and enforces."

This is what evangelical writers mean when they

"speak of God being a moral ruler as well as a holy and loving Father."¹

And later in the same lecture, Candlish speaks of,

"this amazing harmony of law and love in the Father's manner of dealing with me."²

Thus for Candlish while the love of God was absolutely fundamental in every way, yet the justice of God was too fundamental a concept to be dismissed. Professor John McIntyre puts the case as follows:

"any adequate doctrine of Atonement must come to terms with the justice of God and not simply treat it as if it were removed by God's love or mercy."³

And Professor Riddell has this to say:

"...Divine Law...must be recognised as never in antagonism to but always consonant with the Love of God."⁴

And in the same book, he quotes approvingly a statement from Daniel Lamont's book: Christ and the World of Thought wherein:

"The idea "that Christ came into the world to tell us that God was the God of Love and not of Judgement...is a travesty of the Christian Gospel. God's Love is always Holy Love which cannot be separated from Judgement wherever there is sin."⁵

Candlish saw clearly that there is a love of God - a love from which flows the sin-annulling atonement of Christ; but he also saw that there is the law of God consistent with His just and moral nature, and that this is also important in a consideration of the doctrine of the Atonement. Or as Professor Riddell has it:

1 - Conscience and the Bible - R.S. Candlish - p.19.

2 - Op. cit. - p.33

3 - St. Anselm and His Critics - John McIntyre, Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd: 1954 pp. 103-104

4 - Why Did Jesus Die? - J.G. Riddell - pp.110-111 5 - Op.cit. - p.99

"He can bring about the fulfilment of His redemptive purpose only in the way that harmonises with the principles which He has laid down in love and law for the ordering of the world."¹

Candlish repudiated in the strongest terms any false antithesis between the love of God and the justice of God, just as he saw the wrath of God and the love of God as complementary rather than as antithetical. Candlish would have approved of Brunner's words when he writes:

"The wrath of God under which the idolatrous, sinfully perverted man stands is simply the divine love, which has become a force opposed to him who has turned against God. The wrath of God is the love of God, in the form in which the man who has turned away from God and turned against God, experiences it, as indeed, thanks to the holiness of God, he must and ought to experience it."²

1 - Op. cit. - p.112

2 - Man in Revolt - E. Brunner, London: Lutterworth: 1953 - p.187

b) Atonement Presupposes a Sinful Humanity

In the New Testament, the Gospel writers

"set their 'good news' against a sombre background. Jesus does not save men from some imaginary danger, but from very real peril."¹

And the writer goes on to say that the peril from which Christ saves men is the peril of sin. Everywhere in the New Testament, the fact of the Incarnation and the Atoning work of Christ is set in relationship to sin.

"Whatever we may think of the Incarnation",

writes James Orr,

"..in Scripture, it is always brought into immediate connection with sin, and with the purpose of God in Redemption. "He was manifested to take away sins," says John...and so say all the writers in the New Testament."²

And James Denney insists that

"..Scripture....dwells on the fact that Christ came into the world to save sinners - that man's desperate need drew Him from heaven to earth;..³

The same theologian speaking of the Gospel of John says:

"It is not too much to say that the conception of Christ's death as a sacrifice for sin...is meant to convey decisively the evangelist's own conception of Jesus and His work. He is here to put away sin - that sums up His vocation;..⁴

Indeed, Denney sees the relationship of atonement to sin as so central to the New Testament teaching that he can say:

"The work of Christ in relation to sin is the culminating point in revelation;..⁵

and that

"to make sin unreal is to make redemption unreal also."⁶

With all this, Candlish would have found himself in profound agreement. Candlish lays great emphasis upon the sinfulness of the human race as that one great fact that brought Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of men. In Pauline fashion he lays great

1 - The Cross in the New Testament - Leon Morris, The Paternoster Press: 1965 - p.20

2 - The Christian View of God & The World - J.Orr - p.287

3 - Studies in Theology - James Denney - p.101, London: Hodder & Stoughton: 1895

4 - The Death of Christ - James Denney, London: Hodder & Stoughton: 1902

5 - Studies in Theology - Denney - p.107.

6 - Op.cit. - p.94

stress on man's predicament whereby through sin he find himself estranged from God. Again and again in his writings, he expounds the fact of man's broken relation to the Father - a relationship broken by sin originating in man's disobedience to God through Adam, and one that can only be righted by the Son of Man coming and atoning for sin. That "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" is axiomatic for Candlish, and a fundamental presupposition of atonement:

"He is made of God to you righteousness. He who knew no sin is made sin for you, that you may be the righteousness of God in him. You are in yourselves sin, altogether sin, and sin only. Sin is, as it were, your very being; your essential nature, as fallen and corrupt. Guiltiness, helpless, hell-deserving guiltiness, is the sum and substance of your spiritual state, of your life, which is simply death."¹

And comparing Christ's humanity with ours, Candlish says:

"All manhood is his; manhood such as yours and mine; but untainted, incorrupt, one and indivisible, which yours and mine is not."²

Indeed, Candlish emphasizes that God's call comes to us precisely because of our sinful state.

"The calling is to men. Not men as elect;... not to men as righteous;... not to men as penitents;... not to men as believing, is this call addressed; but....to men as they are, sinners."³

In setting forth unflinchingly the view that all men are sinners who need the redemption that only Christ the Saviour can provide, Candlish was not only expounding the Biblical view, he was also making the same emphasis as did the Reformers. Calvin, for example, writes in The Institutes:

"..Scripture teaches that he was estranged from God through sin, is an heir of wrath, subject to the curse of eternal death, excluded from all hope of salvation, beyond every blessing of God, the slave

1 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - R.S. Candlish - p.316

2 - Sermons - by the late R.S. Candlish with biographical preface - p.32

3 - Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians - R.S.Candlish - p.36

of Satan, captive under the yoke of sin, destined already for a dreadful destruction and already involved in it; and at this point Christ interceded as his advocate, took upon himself and suffered the punishment that, from God's righteous judgement, threatened all sinners; that he purged with his blood those evils which had rendered sinners hateful to God; that by this expiation he made satisfaction and sacrifice duly to God the Father;.....Therefore, to take away all cause for enmity and to reconcile us utterly to himself, he wipes out all evil in us, by the expiation set forth in the death of Christ; that we, who were previously unclean and impure, may show ourselves righteous and holy in his sight."¹

Candlish's view on sin and its relation to atonement is seen in focus much more sharply when we consider his views in his controversy with F.D.Maurice from whom he so heartily dissented. Candlish felt that Maurice's view of sin and its relation to atonement differed radically from the view set forth in the New Testament. Maurice, according to Candlish, taught that man is only in his present predicament because he does not have the spiritual insight to see and appreciate his true relation as it really is. Maurice taught that man

"is in a wrong state because he does not rightly know the state in which, if he would but see it, he actually is, and consequently is not true to himself, or to it. What is wrong about him is righted, not by any act or work of God altering his condition, but by his being made to see what he really is. He is brought into a right state by illumination merely, not by redemption and regeneration."²

And in another place, Candlish says:

"Evidently the author's view is inconsistent with the idea of there being any radical and essential disorder or derangement in man's relation to God, and in the state of his affections towards God, such as needs to be not merely discovered, but remedied and rectified. And therefore it is not surprising that he finds no room in his theology, for any mention of the Fall, or any estimate of its consequences."³

In Maurice,

"..conviction of sin against the second great commandment of the law, which enjoins equal love of our neighbour, - as well as conviction of sin against the first, which enjoins supreme love to God, - is really nothing more than our being made to see and feel that we have been going against a general law of being, - the law of love. There is..no acknow-

1 - The Institutes - J. Calvin - pp.505-506, 2:16:2 & 3, c.f. 2:12:4-7, which deals with the Incarnation as made necessary by men's sin.

2 - Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays - p.90

3 - Op.cit. - pp.91-92

ledgement whatever of guilt, criminality, corruption, - in connexion with rebellion against that law, - essentially different from what may be said to belong to rebellion against any other law of nature.....Law, in its truest and highest sense, as the exponent and the instrument of authoritative moral government, is not admitted in the author's theory. Sin is not.....the transgression of the law."¹

In contrast to all this, Candlish taught that:

"In the presence of my Father in heaven, with my "dark self" haunting me, and dark eternity facing me, I am deeply conscious of guilt lying upon me, and evil dwelling in me. And I am so all the rather, because in him whom I call Father, I recognise not only a being whose very name is Love, but a sovereign Lawgiver and righteous Judge."²

Candlish spoke approvingly of Methodism and of the Methodist preachers who proclaimed

"the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, and the mercy of God also revealed from heaven in the gospel of his grace. He told collier, formalist, self-righteous boaster... that they were guilty and needed pardon, - that they were corrupt and needed renovation, - that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, - to give himself a ransom for them."³

Candlish insisted that it was a mistake to isolate the doctrine of the Incarnation.

"It must be considered in connexion with two other doctrines at least, - the one, the doctrine concerning the nature of man since the Fall, and the other, the doctrine concerning the nature of the undertaking for which the Son of God was born into this world. And...when it is so represented as to be consistent both with the belief of fallen man's depravity and guilt, and with the belief of a real vicarious sacrifice of propitiation, - the Incarnation....becomes only the more valuable."⁴

From the quotations above together with his teaching in other works, it becomes apparent that Candlish emphasizes a number of things regarding sin and the atonement. In the first place, he insists on the objective reality of sin which affects all men without exception. Sin is a condition of men, primarily, and not wrong

1 - Op.cit. - pp.99-100

2 - Op.cit. - pp. 83-84

3 - Op.cit. - pp 85

4 - Op.cit. - p.194

deeds which they perform. Candlish would have agreed with Denney when he writes:

"Sin as a state or condition refers, of course, not to actions, but to persons; it is a conception which bids us think not of what man has done, but of what he is. The sinful action is the symptom or the outcome of a sinfulness which already characterises the actor."¹

In contrast to Maurice, Candlish stresses the fact that sin entered into the human scene through the Fall, and that all men are ontologically related to the Fall, and are thus sinners. It is evident that Candlish subscribes to the view of man known as total depravity. By this, of course, Candlish does not mean that man is as bad as he can possibly be,

"but that the depravity which sin has produced in human nature extends to the whole of it. There is no part of man's nature which is unaffected by it."²

In the second place, Candlish underlines the fact that sin is not just sin against the neighbour - as Maurice had emphasized - but that primarily, sin is sin against God: "Against thee, thee only have I sinned.." Thus Candlish was wont to urge again and again that sin was principally a violation of the law of God, transgression against the holiness and justice of God. Indeed, this view of sin lies at the very heart of Candlish's theology, and plays an important part in his doctrine of atonement. Candlish's views on this matter can best be put forward in a quotation he makes from Principal Hill's Lectures in Divinity:

"The first principle upon which a fair statement of the doctrine of the atonement proceeds is this, that sin is a violation of law, and that the Almighty, in requiring an atonement in order to the pardon of sin, acts as the supreme lawgiver. So important is this principle, that all the objections to the doctrine proceed upon other views of sin Thus, if you consider sin as merely an insult to the majesty of heaven, God the Father as the person offended by this insult, and that wrath of God, of which the Scriptures speak, as something analogous to the emotion of anger excited in our breasts by the petulance of our neighbours, it would seem... more generous to lay aside this wrath, and to accept of an acknowledgement of the offence, than to demand a reparation of the insult..... Further: if the intrinsic evil of sin is the only thing attended to, and the sinner be considered in no other light than as a reasonable creature who has deformed his nature, and whose character has become odious, it may be thought that that repentance is

1 - Studies in Theology - J. Denney - pp.81-82

2 - Op.cit. - p.83

the proper remedy of this evil..Many of the principle objections against the doctrine of atonement remain without an answer when we confine our notions of sin to these..views of it. But...there is a further view of it, not directly included under any of these; and all the objections which I have mentioned arise from the stopping short at some one of these views...without going on to state this further view, that sin is a violation of the law given by the Supreme Being. But it is under the character of a lawgiver that the Almighty is to be regarded both in punishing and in forgiving the sins of men. For although by creation he is the absolute lord..of all, who may...dispose of every part of his works in what manner he pleases, he does not exercise this right of sovereignty in the government of his reasonable creatures, but he has made known to them certain laws, which express what he would have them to do, and he has annexed to these laws certain sanctions which declare the rewards of obedience, and the consequences of transgression. It is this which constitutes what we call the moral government of God.."¹

For Candlish, there is a law of God made known to men - a law which men do not keep, which men are unable to keep, because of sin. It is this fact of the law of God broken by man which introduces the necessity of atonement. As Denney has it:

"We recognise that there is a law or will of God to which our life should conform, and the consciousness of sin is the consciousness that we have set aside that law or will in favour of some end of our own.. Sin is a real thing; a real violation of the will of God, which ought to be our will, and it brings real responsibility along with it."²

In the third place, Candlish insisted upon the objective reality of man's guilt. He would have agreed with James Denney, when he said:

"There is nothing, I believe, which at the present time needs more to be insisted on, in theology and in gospel preaching, than the objectivity and reality of guilt..."

Guilt, goes on Denney,

"is not a subjective illusion which we should...disregard in view of God's infinite love; it is as real as life or death, a gigantic problem alike for God and man. His condemnation of sin, His wrath repelling sin, resting over sin, are not figments of our ignorance and fear; they are absolutely real things, to which our conscience bears a true...testimony."³

Because of man's breach of God's law, man stands in the place of condemnation before Almighty God. His sin, his transgression of God's commands means that

1 - The Atonement - R.S.Candlish - pp.x-xi

2 - Studies in Theology - pp.92-93

3 - Op. cit. - p.94

he stands before God as a guilty sinner. And it is because man's sin is sin against God, that his guilt is such a problem to both God and man. And it is only by the Incarnation and the death of the Redeemer that man's sin is forgiven and his guilt atoned for.

Such then is how Candlish viewed the relationship between sin and the atonement. For him there was no possibility whatsoever of an ultimately satisfying theology that held shallow unbiblical views of sin and guilt. For Candlish the Biblical emphases on the reality of sin and the objectivity of guilt are fundamental pre-suppositions to the doctrine of atonement.

c) Atonement Presupposes Christ as the Head of the Race

One of the most important and oft-repeated presuppositions of atonement to appear in the writings of Candlish is this: that atonement presupposes Christ as the Head of the human race. Stressing, as he does, this ontological relationship between Christ and man, we would naturally expect to find Candlish laying great emphasis upon the true humanity of Jesus, and indeed, this is precisely what we do find. Thus in a volume of sermons he can say:

"He is the man exclusively, pre-eminently...to the absolute exclusion of all others, he is the man, the only man, complete and perfect. He stands alone as man; the man Christ Jesus.....the man for you; the man for men."¹

And in the same volume we read:

"He is the man to mediate between God and man. To be the one mediator, he must be pre-eminently and distinctively the man; the representative man; the one man. The man, not only as being the one alone among his human fellows competent to be their head, gathering up in himself their common nature entire and pure; but as being the one alone of all men whom God owns as his fellow, sharing in common with him the divine natureHe must so receive his manhood into union with his Godhead as to be placed in the position of oneness in nature, not with the multitude of ordinary fallen men, but with the one original man, the first Adam before he sinned."²

And in a passage reminiscent of Irenaeus, Candlish writes:

"In our divine regeneration he brings us to be, - what, through his interposition, Jesus Christ in his miraculous human generation became,-..."³

But the real stress in Candlish concerning the ontological relationship between Christ and humanity is not simply on the humanity of Christ, central as that thought is, but rather on Christ the Incarnate Word as both the Head and Representative of the human race. We see this in the following typical passages from Candlish's works:

"Contemplate him who is....One with God, one also with man, he has a standing before God as the representative man, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven;..."⁴

1 - Sermons by the Late R.S.Candlish, D.D. - p.30

2 - Op.cit. - pp.34-35

4 - The Atonement - R.S. Candlish - p.145

3 - The First Epistle of John - p.356

"For it is as the Father hath life in himself, that he, on our behalf and as our head and representative, has life in himself."¹

"Thus Christ, the last Adam, the second representative and head of humanity, stands contrasted with the first, as the giver of life spiritual, and the giver of it to the whole man,..."²

"He bore a representative character. He..gathered up in his one single person all the interests of all his people."³

And in a quotation from Treffry, he says:

"The first Adam upon his fall 'begat a son in his own likeness;' and so 'the image of the earthy' is set upon his entire posterity. He was the type and model of that degenerate and corrupt condition which was introduced by his sin. It is the office of the second Adam to give back to a lapsed race the forfeited image of God. Nor is he, as the Son of God, the renewer only of the miserable estate of man, but equally the type and model of the new creation."⁴

In his emphasis upon Christ as the Head and Representative of the human race, and in regarding this as an important presupposition of atonement, Candlish was greatly indebted to Irenaeus. Whether Candlish drank deeply and directly from the fountainhead of Irenaeus, or whether the teaching of the great Father was mediated to Candlish through the influence of such men as Calvin, Owen, Treffry, and Kidd, is not easily determined; but that the afore-mentioned men were greatly influenced by Irenaeus, and that they in turn influenced Candlish in his thinking about Christ as the Head and Representative of the human race, is absolutely certain.

In order to fully understand what lies behind Candlish's stress on Christ as the Head and Representative of the human race, we must now take a look at this doctrine as taught by Irenaeus himself.

In much the same way as *ὁμοούσιον* describes the theology of Athanasius, *σὺν κεφαλῇ* sets forth the theology of Irenaeus. Indeed this last-named

1 - The First Epistle of John - p.494

2 - Life in a Risen Saviour - pp.200-201

3 - Sermons by the Late R.S.Candlish - p.271

4 - The Fatherhood of God - R.S. Candlish - pp.xxv-xxvi

Greek word

"is an attempt by Irenaeus to embody the whole of the Biblical proclamation about the work of Christ in a single word."¹

The thought, is , of course Biblical through and through. Indeed, the word in its verbal form is to be found in Ephesians 1:10, where we read,

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ."

It has been suggested that Irenaeus "borrowed" this thought from Justin Martyr,² but be that as it may, Wingren is certainly right when he says that it is this doctrine of *ἡ ἐν Χριστῷ ἐκκλησίᾳ*

"which creates unity in the theology of Irenaeus, whatever the source of this concept may be."³

For Irenaeus the doctrine of 'Recapitulation' begins with the sin and guilt of Adam. The essence of Adam's sin was disobedience.

"Irenaeus has no doubt that the first man's disobedience is the source of the general sinfulness and mortality of mankind...What Adam lost, all lost in him...More than that, all men participated in Adam's deed and therefore shared in his guilt....The theme, based on Rom.5, that the human race sinned 'in Adam' recurs so frequently that quotation is superfluous. Irenaeus nowhere formulates a specific account of the connexion between Adam's guilty act and the rest of mankind. He clearly supposes some kind of mystical solidarity or rather identity, between the father of the race and all his descendants."⁴

It is this doctrine of the Fall that is the necessary background to Irenaeus' understanding and interpretation of the work of Christ in terms of 'Recapitulation.

"Because of His measureless love," he writes, 'He became what we are in order to enable us to become what He is.' The method he outlines in the oft-repeated assertion that what we lost in Adam we recovered in Christ; its premiss is the idea that, if we fell through our solidarity with the first man, we can be restored through our solidarity with Christ. The key-conception which Irenaeus employs to explain this is 'recapitulation' (*ἡ ἐν Χριστῷ ἐκκλησίᾳ*), which he borrows from St. Paul's description of the divine purpose 'to sum up all things in Christ'. He understands the Pauline text as implying that the Redeemer gathers together, includes or comprises the whole of reality in Himself, the human race being included. In close conjunction with this he exploits to the full the parallelism

1 - Man and the Incarnation - Gustaf Wingren - p.80 Oliver & Boyd: Edinburgh & London: 1959

2 - Op. cit. - see p.80

3 - Op. cit. - p.81

4 - Early Christian Doctrines - J.N.D. Kelly - Second Edition, Adam & Charles Black: London: 1960 - pp.171-172

between Adam and Christ which was so dear to St. Paul.. Christ is indeed, in his eyes, the 'second Adam'...and 'recapitulated' or reproduced the first even in the manner of His birth being generated from the Blessed Virgin as he was from virgin earth....Thus, when He became incarnate, Christ 'recapitulated in Himself the long sequence of mankind', and passed through the stages of human life, sanctifying each in turn. As a result (and this is Irenaeus' main point), just as Adam was the originator of a race disobedient and doomed to death, so Christ can be regarded as inaugurating a new, redeemed humanity... ..humanity, which.....was seminally present in Adam, has been given the opportunity of making a new start in Christ, the second Adam, through incorporation in His mystical body. The original Adam, by his disobedience, introduced the principle of sin and death, but Christ by His obedience has reintroduced the principle of life and immortality. Because He is identified with the human race at every phase of its existence, He restores fellowship with God to all, perfecting man according to God's image and likeness. And because He is a real man, born of a woman, He is able to vanquish the Devil, into whose power mankind had fallen."¹

It will be seen that 'recapitulation' for Irenaeus is the accomplishment of God's plan of salvation for humanity through the total life and work of Christ.

"Recapitulation!...is not an episode at one particular point of time. It is a continuous process.....First, and most important of all - and the basis of our whole salvation - is the event of the birth of Jesus when the Son of God became an actual man. Many other things are consequent on this basic fact - the conflict, death, and Resurrection of Christ - but from one aspect what follows the primary event is simply a development of the resources of the power which was brought into the world through the child in Bethlehem."²....."It is only the Incarnate One, the One who has been made flesh, who recapitulates. All that Christ does from His birth at Bethlehem until the judgement of the world He does as the One who was incarnate. His humanity, His flesh, is part not only of His Passion and death, but also of His Resurrection and dominion over the world - He never gives up the humanity which he bore during the days of His earthly life."³

We may summarize Irenaeus' theology of 'Recapitulation' as follows:-

- 1) Christ recapitulates the whole of creation.
- 2) More particularly, Christ recapitulates man - Adam. This indeed is the fundamental factor for Irenaeus.
- 3) Recapitulation is solely the work of God in Christ.
- 4) What man has lost in Adam he recovers in Jesus Christ.
- 5) Through a life of perfect obedience, Christ recapitulates our whole life, sanctifying it at every stage. He faces and

1 - Op.cit. - pp.172-173

2 - Man and the Incarnation - G.Wingren - p.81

3 - Op.cit. - pp.82-83

overcomes temptation, takes our sin and death upon Himself and rises for us from the dead as the new man. In this whole process is man's redemption.

- 6) Irenaeus' whole doctrine of 'Recapitulation' is conceived of in terms of both the Active and Passive Obedience of Jesus Christ.

In the light of this, exception must be taken to the oft-repeated charge that Irenaeus teaches a doctrine of salvation through Incarnation alone.¹ To assert that in Irenaeus it is only

"the incarnation itself which effects..redemption...is a dangerous half-truth. At most the incarnation...is the presupposition of redemption. In the first place, Irenaeus is quite clear that Christ redeemed us with His blood, and when using the imagery of our enslavement to the Devil he is prepared to speak of the Saviour's blood as our ransom....Secondly, and more significantly, he emphasizes that since the essence of Adam's sin was disobedience, the obedience of Christ was indispensable; it is obedience that God requires, and in which man's glory consists..... Irenaeus speaks of Christ's dying for us or reconciling us to God by His passion, or of His 'propitiating for us the Father against whom we sinned', or of God's offering His Son as a 'sacrifice for our redemption', and these are commonly regarded as standing apart from his main theory of recapitulation. In fact, they cohere admirably with it, suggesting as they do that the Lord's passion and sacrificial death were the supreme and necessary expression of His obedience."²

Thus when we see how Candlish constantly lays the emphasis upon the fact that the earnest of man's salvation is wrought out in the whole life of Christ's obedience, which obedience finds its supreme expression on the Cross, we realize just how much he had learned from Irenaeus, and how closely he followed in the footsteps of the great Father of the Church.³

Another important emphasis made by Candlish, that is closely related to the thought of Christ as the Head and Representative of the human race, is the thought of Christ as our 'kinsman-redeemer'. This phrase is used quite often by Candlish in his exposition of the ontological or incarnational aspect of the redemption won for us in and by Jesus Christ. Here the stress falls on Christ as our 'elder brother', on Christ as 'bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh'.

1 - As, e.g. in Seeberg, Harnack, & Lietzmann

2 - Early Christian Doctrines - J.N.D. Kelly - pp.173-174

3 - C.f. also the relevant passages in Calvin's Institutes, Book Two (esp.2:12:1-4) with which Candlish was undoubtedly familiar.

"In Christ as our kinsman-redeemer, - our elder brother, - through faith in him as sustaining to us that character and uniting us to himself accordingly, - we apprehend God as a father, loving us as sons with the very love with which he loves him."¹

And in the same volume he says:

"He enters into my position as a guilty criminal..liable to the pains and penalties of law. As my kinsman-redeemer, taking my nature and my place, he assumes all my responsibilities, and makes me one with himself in his doing so. He freely consents to underlie my guilt and to expiate it by a suitable and sufficient satisfaction; giving himself to me as my substitute, and accepted as such by the Father."²

And in an expository work on the Resurrection, Candlish speaks of Christ who is able

"to bear your sin, to atone for your guilt, to take your place; - to be your substitute, your surety, your elder brother, your kinsman-redeemer; - to obey for you, to suffer for you, to bring you back to my Father and your Father...."³

The Biblical concept that lies behind the thought of Christ as our 'kinsman-redeemer', is the Hebrew word GOEL. The word is found in many passages in the Old Testament, especially in the Book of Ruth, the Book of Leviticus, and in Job and the Psalms. In this concept of the GOEL

"we have an important conception of redemption derived out of old Israelite family and family-property law. It is the concept of redemption out of bankruptcy or bondage or forfeited rights undertaken by the advocacy of a kinsman who is bound to the person in need not only by blood ties, but by a community in property.....the verb ^{S X 2} means to lay claim to something that has been lost or forfeited or alienated. The noun ^{S X 2} describes the claimant who on the ground of a relation of responsibility is the vindicator, the redeemer. In practice he is the next of kin, so that the ^{S X 2} generally describes a kinsman-redeemer, for it is primarily he who has the right of redemption or who is primarily responsible for the vindication of an alienated right.....The Goel acts in virtue of his position and relation to the person who is in need through forfeiture of his right or through bondage, and he redeems him by rightfully claiming his cause as his own, and standing for him, by assuming responsibility for him, and taking his burdens upon himself, since he is unable to do it for himself."⁴

1 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - p.6

2 - Op.cit. - p.18

3 - Life in a Risen Saviour - pp.244-245

4 - The Understanding of Redemption in the Early Church - A set of printed lecture notes by - T.F.Torrance - pp.21-22

Not only was it the task of the GOEL to safeguard the property of a kinsman, and restore the forfeited liberty of a brother, it was also his task to avenge the blood of a murdered relative, thereby vindicating the name and thus ensuring that retributive justice was carried out.

"This remarkable conception of redemption is applied by the Old Testament to God Himself.....God is conceived to be bound up with His people not only through a property relation, but through marriage for He is the Father of His people Israel."¹

Indeed, ultimately the Old Testament teaching is that

"no man can ultimately stand surety for another and make his cause his own...God alone can step in and deliver us and bestow life upon us in redemption.(cf. Psalm 49, Hosea 13:14).....God enters into the human situation, into the midst of our responsibilities and culpabilities, to stand for us like a kinsman-advocate and to justify us against judgement, and so to stand surety for us within our frailty and corruption and lostness, and so to be the life of our life and to redeem us."²

In the New Testament this same concept - that God is our GOEL - is applied to Jesus Christ Himself. Here,

"The primary fact.. is the Incarnation itself, the fact that the Son of God has become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, so that we are bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. As if that were not enough, He has established a new Covenant with us, and on the ground of that new Covenant, He comes forth to lay down His life in atoning sacrifice and redemption, that is as our Kinsman-redeemer, bonded to us by Covenant.....It is then on the ground of the kinship between Christ and us that He assumes responsibility for us and stands in for us as our Redeemer."³

It is then, this fundamental concept of the GOEL as applied to Jesus Christ our Kinsman-redeemer, that occupies such a large place in Candlish's thinking, and is undoubtedly for him, an important presupposition of atonement. Not that the GOEL concept exhausts Candlish's understanding of the Person and work of Christ; rather, it is this: in this concept, Candlish emphasizes the ontological aspect of our redemption through Christ our Elder brother. Thus for Candlish, the GOEL concept is an important aspect of redemption, for it means,

1 - The Understanding of Redemption in the Early Church - T.F.Torrance - p.23

2 - Op.cit. - p.23

3 - Op.cit. - p.25

"Redemption through a Kinsman-Advocate, who acting out of a blood-tie or a covenant bond, or out of His pure love forging such a bond in Himself and in the Blood of the New Covenant, stands in our place, takes our lost cause on Himself as His own, and makes sure our redemption in Himself, and so delivers us out of our bondage into the freedom of our inheritance in God. Here the stress is upon the nature of the Redeemer and our kinship with Him."¹

Here the emphasis is upon the ontological aspect of atonement.

At this point we must pause to note that there is in the theology of Candlish an unresolved tension between his firm belief that Christ is truly the Head and Representative of the human race, and his belief in the doctrine known as Limited Atonement. That Candlish espoused the view that Christ died only for the elect, that His atonement was thus limited to those whom God had chosen to be His own, can be seen most clearly in his book entitled: The Atonement: Its Reality, Completeness, and Extent. Here in this volume, Candlish sets forth a defence of Limited Atonement, a doctrine that was held by most members of both the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland, at the time of Candlish's writings.² The view, so widely held, as espoused by Candlish in his book, is stated by him in the following proposition:

"..for whomsoever Christ died at all he died efficaciously and effectually."³

In common with all who held this doctrine, Candlish elicits support from the Scriptures. In chapters three to six of his book, he examines carefully those texts and passages of Scripture that are said both to teach the doctrine of Limited Atonement, and to deny it. His comments on John chapter seventeen and his conclusions from that same chapter are typical of his conclusions from other parts of Scripture:

"Nothing...can well be clearer, to an earnest student of that prayer, than this, that it proceeds throughout upon the idea of the limitation

1 - Op.cit. - p.28

2 - The vote in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1831 which overwhelmingly found McLeod Campbell guilty of heresy proves this point, surely.

3 - The Atonement - R.S. Candlish - p.86

of the entire work of Christ to the people given to him by the Father."¹...
"Thus Christ unequivocally restricts and limits his own work of obedience,
atonement, and intercession, to those whom the Father hath given."²

It is perhaps hardly necessary in this day and age to state what has become a commonplace today, that the doctrine of A Limited Atonement can only be upheld exegetically by resorting to special pleading, such as always interpreting the word "world" as the "elect world." And to take but one example, to interpret "world" in John 3:16 as the "elect world" is simply to make nonsense of the meaning of the text. It is not the "elect world" that God so loved, it is the world, pure and simple, without any interpretive adornments introduced to make it conform to a rigid scheme.

In his book on The Atonement. Candlish is careful, however, to emphasize the fact that Christ's death on the cross has a certain reference not only to the elect but to all men. Thus he writes:

"For it must be admitted...that the death of Christ has a certain reference to all men universally; such a reference as to impose upon all men universally the obligation to hear and to believe. The offer of salvation through the death of Christ is made, in the Gospel, to all men universally. It is an offer..most gracious and free on the part of God. But it could scarcely be so, without there being some sort of relation between the death of Christ and every man, even of those that ultimately perish...what may be the precise bearing of Christ's death on every individual, even of the lost, I presume not to define. My position is this - that it is unnecessary to define it.....
For if we hold that faith is the actual personal closing with God's free and unconditional gift, on the part of the individual sinner, we are not required to state, in the form of a categorical proposition, what is the precise relation between the death of Christ and all mankind."³

Candlish was aware of the common two-fold criticism levelled against the doctrine of Limited Atonement, whereby the doctrine seemed to limit the love of God to the world, and at the same time embarrass the free proclamation of the Gospel. To these criticisms Candlish provided a two-fold answer. In the first place, he argued that the free proclamation of the Gospel to all men is necessary because it

1 - Op.cit. - p.100

2 - Op.cit.- p.102

3 - The Atonement - pp.36-37

affects men's obligations and responsibilities to God. Their guilt increases because they have heard the Gospel. Men are now the more inexcusable because they have heard the Good News proclaim.¹ Secondly, Candlish argued that the Atonement had a universal application in that it procures for all mankind "a season of forbearance, a suspension of judgement." For Candlish, this dispensation of gracious forbearance is directly ascribed to the atoning death of Christ. Because the Atonement procures this dispensation of gracious forbearance, it has, according to Candlish, a universal bearing to mankind at large.²

In this book on the atonement, Candlish argues that the death of the Redeemer must not be understood as being efficacious except in the case of the elect. He writes:

"To conceive of Christ's work as undertaken and accomplished for any but those actually saved.....we altogether change the nature and character of that work, so that it ceases to be work of substitution, properly so called..."³

But here we must say that Candlish was wrong. As one who was so greatly influenced by Irenaeus in his doctrine of Christ as the Head and Representative of the Human Race, Candlish ought to have learned from the great Church Father, that the work of substitution does not begin on the Cross, but begins at the Incarnation, at which point Christ becomes a substitute for the human race. Actually, Candlish realized this, but he never logically applied Irenaeus' teachings of Christ as the Head of the Race to the doctrine of the Atonement. Had he done so, Candlish would have seen that the doctrine which teaches that Christ is truly the Head of the Race and not only of the Elect, necessarily implies that Christ has died for the whole world. If the Incarnation and the Atonement are of a piece as Candlish so clearly saw; if they are but two aspects of the one thing, then consistency demands that a theory that postulates Christ as the Representative Head of humanity, of necessity teaches that He occupied

1 - See Op.cit. - pp. 171-172

2 - See Op.cit. - p.188

3 - Op.cit. - p.213

the same position when He died. To state this in another way: if Candlish was right in teaching a doctrine of Limited Atonement, to be truly consistent, he also ought to have taught a doctrine of Limited Representation. But he didn't. Rather he taught that

"There is..another head and representative of humanity; the last Adam...In his incarnation, he comes forth the same, as to his bodily and animal nature, that the first Adam was when he was made."¹

In speaking of this apparently unresolved tension between Candlish's teaching on Limited Atonement and his teaching about Christ as the Representative Head of the Race, it ought to be pointed out that Candlish's teaching on Limited Atonement in his book, The Atonement, is ^{FROM} one of his earlier works of a theological nature. The book was written by Candlish in 1860, though he admits in the preface, that it

"is not exactly a new book"²

being based largely and almost completely on a book on the Atonement published in 1843. Thus it is fair to say that Candlish's thinking on the Atonement as expressed in his book by that name, is the result of his earlier theological thinking. In his later and more important theological works,³ it becomes increasingly apparent that the doctrine of Limited Atonement no longer appears in his writing. One must be fair and state that nowhere in these later writings does Candlish explicitly say that he has had a change of mind regarding Limited Atonement, nor does he in any of these books actually deny the doctrine of Limited Atonement. Rather it is a matter of silence on the subject. Indeed, there becomes

1 - Life in a Risen Saviour - R.S. Candlish - p.208

2 - The Atonement - R.S.Candlish - pv.

3 - 1) The Fatherhood of God 2) On the Sonship and Brotherhood of Believers
 3) The First Epistle of John 4) Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
 5) The Gospel of Forgiveness 6) Sermons by the late R.S. Candlish

an increasing tendency to emphasize the fact that the Gospel is a universal message and that it is to be proclaimed to all men unconditionally. It is true, of course, that one can still stress this as did the Marrow men, and yet hold to a doctrine of Limited Atonement, but when we take the stress on the Universal aspect of the Gospel together with the silence in these later writings about Limited Atonement, one may legitimately wonder whether or not Candlish had come, if not to wholly change his mind on the subject, at least to be less sure that Limited Atonement was really the teaching of the New Testament.

Candlish was living, of course, in the days when McLeod Campbell was disseminating his views, so diametrically opposed to Limited Atonement, and so eloquently set forth in his book.¹ It is inconceivable that Candlish was unaware of this change of climate, just as it is surely inconceivable that Candlish never read McLeod Campbell's book on the Atonement. Whether he read the book, or whether he was influenced in his thinking about the Atonement by McLeod Campbell's teaching, we don't know. There is not a hint in his theological writings about McLeod Campbell and his teaching, and nothing as far as we have been able to ascertain, in his other writings or private correspondence. Only this much seems reasonably certain: as he increased in wisdom and stature as a theologian, Limited Atonement no longer occupied a place in his more mature writings, and it is not, surely, an unreasonable conclusion, that this was the case because Candlish had come to see that the truth of the Gospel was not to be found in the doctrine known as Limited Atonement.

1 - The Nature of the Atonement - J. McLeod Campbell.

d) Atonement Presupposes the Incarnate Life of Christ.

In formulating a doctrine of Atonement, one of the errors that has persisted down through the centuries is that of seeking to fully explain atonement by a single theory that lays the emphasis upon only one aspect of redemption. Thus, for example, in Protestant theology, there are many theologians who have sought to explain the Atonement wholly in terms of the forensic. Often, this has taken the form of the penal-substitutionary theory of atonement. Our quarrel is not that this particular theory does not have something important, something vital to contribute to a doctrine of atonement, but that, by itself, it does not fully explain the length and breadth of atonement. Again, there are those who have sought to explain atonement solely in terms of the so-called Dramatic Theory, where Christ is set forth as the victorious conqueror over sin, death, and the powers of evil, through His work on the Cross.¹ No one conversant with the epistles of Paul, would deny for a moment, that here we have a legitimate emphasis, but to say that the Dramatic Theory encompasses everything in Atonement, is simply to be wrong. Finally, there have been those who have sought to understand the Atonement in terms of the ontological, in terms of Christ's Incarnation, so much so, that one would think that the Incarnation itself was the atonement. Here again, in stressing the Incarnation in a doctrine of the atonement, we have an emphasis that is biblical through and through. As we have seen, it is especially found in the writings of the Fathers, notably those of Irenaeus. But it is one thing to see the Incarnation as a vital element in a total doctrine of Atonement, and it is quite another thing to see it as everything. In Scotland, the tendency has been to stress the penal-substitutionary and to a lesser extent,

¹ - Christus Victor - G.Aulen is a good example of this.

the Incarnational aspect of atonement, and to neglect the Dramatic aspect. As we noted in our introductory chapter, Erskine of Linlathen and McLeod Campbell are notable exceptions to this rule, Adam Philip, quoting Dr. John Duncan has this to say:

"We make far too little of the Incarnation; the Fathers knew much more of the incarnate God. Some of them were oftener at Bethlehem than at Calvary; they had too little of Calvary, but they knew Bethlehem well....We are not too often at the cross, but we are too seldom at the cradle; and we know too little of the Word made flesh..."¹

It is because too little has been made of the Incarnation in Scottish theology, especially as it is related to the Atonement, that some theologians in Scotland writing on the Atonement, feel it necessary to state at the outset that Atonement presupposes Incarnation. Thus Professor Riddell writes:

"It is to be recognised, in the first place, that the emphasis rightly laid upon the Cross as all-important in God's reconciling men to Himself has sometimes concealed the fact that the heralding of "redemption's story" and our interpretation of the work of Christ must be based not only upon the fact that Jesus died, but upon all that preceded and followed His death..... Any suggestion that Jesus came into the world merely to die, or, conversely, that His death is less important for faith than His life, will inevitably lead us astray. The Cross, indeed, cannot rightly be understood unless account be taken of the Incarnation and the Resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit..."²

And in a later passage he writes:

"Christian theology, at its best....has held together the life of Jesus and His death."³

James Orr finds it also necessary to register a protest against a narrow doctrine of atonement that fails to link it up with the fact of Christ's Incarnation.

"Here at the outset it is necessary to guard against too narrow an idea of Redemption, as if the saving work of Christ were limited to that doing and suffering which we call the Atonement."⁴

1 - The Devotional Literature of Scotland - Adam Phillip
London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd.: No Date - p.93

2 - Why did Jesus Die? - J.G.Riddell - pp.55-56

3 - Op.cit. - p.57

4 - The Christian View of God & The World - James Orr - p.288

It is at once the merit of Candlish, that in an age that was all too prone to view the Atonement in a narrow forensic fashion, he saw clearly that Incarnation and Atonement were really inseparable, that they are really two aspects of the one work of Christ. As one reads and re-reads Candlish's theological works, it becomes increasingly clear that for the writer, the life and the death of Jesus are to be viewed as a consistent whole in the work of atonement. Salvation is not only through the death of Christ; it is also through His life. There is both a saving humanity, and a saving dying in the work of the atonement. The same truth expressed differently is this: Atonement presupposes the incarnate life of Christ.

One of the ways in which Candlish stresses that Incarnation and Atonement must be held together, is in his emphasis that atonement is really through Christ Himself in His wholeness, rather than through some work He performed. Thus he writes:

"It may be admitted that...the assumption of our nature by the Son of God, - has sometimes been viewed by divines...too much as if it were merely a means to an end, - a step in the work of redemption.... There is always danger lest we substitute a thing, a transaction, a plan, or whatever it may be called, instead of a real living person..."¹

And in a volume of sermons, speaking of the nearness of Christ's righteousness to us, he says:

"In the person, in the obedience, in the atoning death of Christ it is near."²

In making this emphasis upon the atonement as fundamentally in and through Christ Himself as a person, it is obvious that Candlish is protesting against the common tendency to speak of atonement as if it were accomplished through some specific act, e.g. His death, rather than through Jesus Christ in the wholeness of His Person and work. We hear this same protest today that Candlish was

1 - Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays - p.193, cf. The Atonement pp. 232-233 "I speak to them of Christ as being Himself the Atonement".

2 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - p.253

making a hundred years ago. For example, Brunner writes:

"The doctrine of the Incarnation, the Christmas message, is as important as the doctrine of 'satisfaction,' the message of Good Friday. Neither can be separated from the other. Not just death, but the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God,...is significant for faith."¹

Leon Morris points to the same truth when he writes:

"C.K.Barrett makes essentially this point when he says, 'What John perceived with far greater clarity than any of his predecessors, was that Jesus is the Gospel, and that the Gospel is Jesus. It was through the life, and especially through the death and resurrection of Jesus that men had been admitted to the blessings of the messianic kingdom.... That is, when the Gospel was offered to men it was Christ himself who was offered to them..."²

Because Candlish realised that atonement and revelation must be held together and that revelation and reconciliation are really inseparable, his continual stress was upon the fact of the Person and the Work of Christ as a whole. He saw clearly and stressed repeatedly that His Person and Work, His Life and Death are of a piece and must be held together in one consistent whole in a truly Biblical doctrine of atonement. This emphasis abounds throughout all his theological writings.

"It is "the man Christ Jesus" who is the "manifested life." He is so from first to last, during all the days of his flesh; from his being "made of a woman, made under the law," to his being "made sin and made a curse" for us, and thereafter, "for his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, highly exalted;".....Every intervening incident, every miracle, every discourse, every act of grace, every word of wisdom and of love, is a part of this manifestation. In every one of them "the eternal life which was with the Father is manifested to us." He who liveth with the Father evermore, dwelling in his bosom, is manifesting to us in himself - in his manhood, in his feelings, sayings, doings, sufferings, as a man dwelling among us...."³

And a few pages later he says:

"What that "eternal life" is; how he is that life with the Father righteous, holy, loving, how he is that life to us, miserably dead in sin; this is what is manifested in him as he was on earth, and in all that he taught, and did, and suffered."⁴

1 - The Mediator - E. Brunner - p.409

2 - The Cross in the New Testament - L.Morris - p.161 footnote 41

3 - The First Epistle of John - p.4.

4 - Op.cit. - p.7.

Our union, taught Candlish, is with Christ both in His life and death.

"He is come...not only to make you one with himself in his atoning death and in his holy life..."¹

Candlish thus saw all too clearly that

"it is not possible...to isolate the doctrine of the Incarnation"²

It must be considered in connection with, indeed as part of, the act of atonement. For Candlish, the Cross was but the climax of atonement; the death of Christ was the completion of that atoning work which begins with Christ's humiliation. Thus he can speak of

"the value and virtue of the work of obedience and atonement which he finishes on the cross;"³

And in a pamphlet he can speak of

"The whole work of Christ, in His Incarnation, obedience, sufferings, death and resurrection."⁴

Candlish then, was absolutely positive that

"Christ's work in His Passion and Death is not to be properly understood except as it is included in the total effect of His whole historical manifestation upon the earth."⁵

As we shall see later, he saw the Cross as absolutely central in the great atoning act of God in Christ, but he saw,

"The cross as the way of costly love and faithful obedience"

as

"the final act in doing what Jesus had been doing all through his ministry."⁶

He realised, and never stopped emphasizing that.

"In trying to answer the question Why Did Jesus Die? we must seek an interpretation of His death which, as well as being distinctively Christian and communicable to others, shall do justice to the

1 - Op.cit. - p.485

2 - Examination of Mr.Maurice's Theological Essays - p.194

3 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - p.272

4 - The Pope the Antichrist of Scripture: A Lecture - p.11

5 - The Work of Christ - R.S.Franks - p.xv, Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd.: London: 1962

6 - The Gospel According to Matthew - F.V.Filson, Adam & Charles Black: London: 1960 -

whole truth that for us men and for our salvation the Lord Jesus Christ came down from heaven and was made man...rose again, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father..."¹

It was because he also recognised this important truth that James Orr wrote:

"..I am led to study this subject of Atonement through Christ especially from the point of view of the Incarnation. There is an advantage in this method, for as, on the one hand, we see how the Atonement rises naturally out of the Incarnation, so that the Son of God could not appear in our nature without undertaking such a work as this term denotes; so, on the other hand, we see that the Incarnation is itself a pledge and anticipation of reconciliation...the Incarnation is the declaration of a purpose to save the world. It is more; it is itself a certain stage in that reconciliation, and the point of departure for every other. In the Incarnation, God and man are already in a sense one. In Christ a pure point of union is established with our fallen and sin-laden humanity, and this carries with it the assurance that everything else that is necessary for the complete recovery of the world to God will not be lacking."²

There is much in Hastings Rashdall's interpretation of the Atonement which would have found little sympathy from Candlish, but there can be no calling in question that Candlish would have gladly supported Rashdall when he wrote:

"it ought not merely to be admitted, but to be proclaimed upon the housetops....that the saving influence which we attribute to Christ is not confined to His death.....Christ's life, His teaching, His character, the visions of the risen Lord, and the hopes of immortality which those visions inspired" - all this as well as His death is vital to a true interpretation of the Atonement."³

Underlining as he does, the fact that it is the Person and work held in a proper balance that secures atonement from sin; stressing as he is wont to stress, that it is by the whole course of His life that Christ reconciles man to God, we would expect to find in Candlish's writings, an emphasis upon the Active Obedience of Christ. And this is, in point of fact, what we do indeed find. In emphasizing the Active Obedience of Christ, however, it must not be thought that Candlish ever sought to separate them. Candlish fully recognises that while we may legitimately distinguish between the Active and Passive Obedience in order to show that atonement is not effected only through His Passive Obedience, yet the two are essentially

1 - Why Did Jesus Die? - J.E.Riddell - p.60

2 - The Christian View of God and the World - James Orr - pp.296-297

3 - Why Did Jesus Die? - p.81

one. Like the Master's seamless robe, Christ's Active and Passive Obedience are of a piece:

"in Christ and his finished work of obedience and atonement, the righteousness of God is brought near, as fully and finally satisfied and glorified.."¹

This idea of speaking of Christ's total obedience in terms of His Active and Passive Obedience, yet recognising that they are essentially the one thing is entirely in keeping with Reformed thinking:

"The distinction between the active and passive obedience of Christ is not emphasised in Reformed theology in order to distinguish or separate them but in order to insist that the whole course of Christ's active obedience is integral to His work of reconciliation and that atonement cannot be limited to His passive obedience, that is to His passive submission to the penalty for our sin inflicted on Christ in His death. The active and passive obedience do not differ in regard to time for both extend to the very beginning of the Incarnation, to the birth of Jesus, and both reach out to its fulfilment in His death and resurrection. Nor do they differ with regard to their subject, for they are both manifestations of the one obedience of the Son of God in our humanity. They involve one another mutually in the unity of the one Person and in the unity of the whole life of Christ."²

Thus throughout all of Candlish's writings of a theological nature where he is discussing atonement, there is to be found this almost extraordinary emphasis upon

"the value and virtue of the work of obedience and atonement which he finishes on the cross;"³

upon

"his actual work for which he is anointed, the work of redeeming us by his obedience..⁴

upon

"the perfect obedience by which he fulfilled all righteousness."⁵

In another typical utterance, Candlish speaks of Christ who has

"perfectly accomplished their redemption - cleansing them from all stains of guilt, delivering them from condemnation, presenting them faultless before God, through the faultless worth of his own obedience..⁶

1 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - R.S.Candlish - p.253

2 - The School of Faith - Edited by T.F.Torrance - p.lxxxv

3 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - p.272

4 - The First Epistle of John - p.186

5 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - p.60

6 - The Son of Man Lord of the Sabbath - A Sermon - p.7

And in another place he writes:

"Here is your righteousness, the righteousness on the ground of which you, a guilty sinner, are justified, acquitted, accepted. It is Christ, Christ loving the Father, and as the Father gave him commandment, so doing. His doing is his passion, his suffering, his dying. But it is doing still. In one view it is passive righteousness; his endurance on the cross. But it is active righteousness as well. It is the crowning instance of his obedience; that obedience unto death for which God "has highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name;.."1

By the Active Obedience of Christ, Candlish means Christ's fulfilment throughout His whole life as the Father's obedient Son who voluntarily fulfils the Father's will perfectly as the Father's obedient servant. Christ's role as the Son who voluntarily accepts and perfectly fulfils the Father's will is one that finds constant expression in Candlish:

"..in the fulness of time, the Son appears among men. He appears as the Son; on his Father's behalf; entrusted with his Father's commission; to be about his Father's business. Thus Jesus is seen as the Son..... He is the Son..chiefly, in respect of the work or office with a view to which he is the Christ. He is the Son consenting to be the Father's servant, and as such anointed of the Father for the accomplishment of the Father's purpose.....It is only when you recognise him as anointed to do his Father's will in the sacrifice of himself that you really own him, in any distinct sense, as the Son."2

And in another volume he says:

"This is a vital element in his entire work. The whole of his humiliation from first to last, the whole of his obedience unto death, was spontaneous and voluntary. This is obviously true of the first step taken, when, being in the form of God, he assumed the form of a servant."3

And in the same volume he says:

"He has a commandment, a commission from the Father...and he executes it to the very uttermost. In his voluntary death on the cross, his active obedience is proved and perfected."4

The thought of Christ in His Active Obedience voluntarily doing the Father's will in the role of a servant is stressed in the following passage:

1 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - p.73

2 - The First Epistle of John - R.S.Candlish - pp.185-186

3 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - p.59 4 - Op.cit. - p.61

"Coming unto him, you are to be associated and identified with him, not only in his taking upon himself the form or condition of a servant, but also in his doing the work of a servant. That work consists of his obedience unto death; his fulfilment of all righteousness, and his endurance of the cross, in the room and stead of the guilty, whose substitute he was appointed by the Father, and himself freely consented to become."¹

This central place of the obedience of Christ as the Servant-Son in the work of atonement which we find in Candlish, is an emphasis which we find supremely set forth in the teaching of John Calvin. In the Institutes, Calvin poses the question:

"How has Christ abolished sin, banished the separation between us and God, and acquired righteousness to render God favorable and kindly toward us?"²

And he goes on,

"To this we can reply that he has achieved this for us by the whole course of his obedience....from the time when he took on the form of a servant, he began to pay the price of liberation in order to redeem us."²

Thus for Calvin, atonement is not wrought solely on the Cross, it is completed at the Cross but not wholly effected there. Atonement begins with the humiliation of Christ and takes place throughout the whole of His life in which as the Servant-Son He perfectly fulfils all obedience to the Father, which obedience is supremely manifested in His self-offering on the Cross. It is precisely because this emphasis is missing in the Apostle's Creed, which moves swiftly from the Birth to the Death of Jesus, that Calvin appears to be unhappy about this Creed.³

To regard the Incarnation then, as merely instrumental, is something that Candlish would have categorically rejected. Atonement absolutely presupposes the humiliation, birth and Incarnate Life of Christ, for, in the final analysis, Incarnation and Atonement must be held together for any true interpretation of the Life and Work of Jesus Christ for the redemption of man.

1 - A Sermon Preached by R.S.Candlish at the Opening of Free St.George's Church, Lothian Road, Edinburgh - p.8

2 - Institutes of the Christian Religion - 2:16:5, p.507

3 - Op.cit. - 2:16:5 - p.508

CHAPTER VI

The Atoning Work of Christ

a) The Hypostatic Union is the Basis for Christ's Work

One of the fundamental axioms running through Candlish's teaching on the Atonement is that atonement necessitated the hypostatic union of Christ; that the Incarnation of Him who acts both from the side of man and the side of God is an absolute presupposition in the work of reconciliation. Indeed the very nerve of the Atonement for Candlish, lay in the fact that in the hypostatic union of Christ, God has wrought an act from the side of God as God, and from the side of man as man. In Candlish's view, Atonement was only possible because there had first been a hypostatic union in the Person of the Word made flesh. Thus the doctrine of the two natures in the one Person of the Mediator, lies at the very heart of Candlish's view of the atoning work of Christ. Thus, e.g. in his work on The First Epistle of John, we find again and again the point made, that the hypostatic union is crucial in the work of redemption, and that to deny that Jesus is truly the Christ which would also be a denial of the hypostatic union - would be to deny the reality of reconciliation through atonement:

"Any denial, whether practical or doctrinal, of the proposition that Jesus is the Christ, is tantamount to a disowning of him personally as the Son. It is only when you recognise him as anointed to do his Father's will in the sacrifice of himself that you really own him, in any distinct sense, as the Son."¹

And so,

"in the fulness of time, the Son appears among men. He appears as the Son; on his Father's behalf; entrusted with his Father's commission; to be about his Father's business. Thus Jesus is seen as the Son. And it is in the character of the Christ that he is seen to be the Son. He is the Son, not merely in respect of his being the holy Jesus....He is the Son also, and chiefly, in respect of the work or office with a view to which he is the Christ. He is the Son consenting to be the Father's servant, and as such anointed of the Father for the accomplishment of the Father's purpose."²

1 - The First Epistle of John - R. S. Candlish - p.186.

2 - Op. cit. - p.185.

But,

"Jesus must be acknowledged as not only one with us, but "separate from us." Not otherwise can he save us by being our substitute; redeem us by being our ransom! reconcile us to God by the sacrifice of himself in our stead. He must be "separate from us" in his birth; exempt by special miracle, from all participation in the sin of humanity, whose guilt he is to expiate. He must be "separate from us" in his death; his death being what no other death ever was, or ever can be, a real satisfaction to offended justice; a valid atonement for the offence; an actual enduring and exhausting of what the penal severity of law requires; a true and literal "suffering, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."¹

Properly to understand who He is and what He accomplishes on our behalf, it is necessary, says Candlish, to grasp the

"full and adequate recognition of his double relation; to us sinners, as our Jesus, and to God the Father, as his Son. And neither of these relations can be fully and adequately recognised, unless his being the Christ is recognised, with all that his being the Christ must be held to fairly imply. Neither what he is to us as our Jesus, nor what he is to God as his Son, can be otherwise known than by what he is anointed to do, and actually does, as the Christ. Set aside his being the Christ; the anointed sacrificer and anointed sacrifice; the anointed priest and anointed victim; set aside his actual work for which he is anointed, the work of redeeming us by his obedience, and the shedding of his blood, or the giving of his life in our stead; and we have neither any Jesus fit to be our saviour, nor any Son of God worth the owning."²

Indeed, Candlish argues that the fact of the hypostatic union means that there must be a special work to be accomplished, that could only be executed by one who is both God and man at the same time. Thus the fact of the hypostatic union testifies to the fact that there is a work of redemption to be done.

"..if Jesus, when on earth, had no special work of redemption to accomplish, - special, I mean, in the sense of its being what none but a real Divine Person, having a real human nature, could do - the work, in short, of the actual substitution of himself in the room and stead of the guilty, to meet legal demands on them, and answer for them judicially, - I confess myself unable to form any idea of the propriety or meaning of the hypostatical union of the two distinct natures in one person."³

1 - Op.cit. - p.182.

2 - Op.cit. - p.186.

3 - Op.cit. - p.193.

For Candlish then, the Atonement could be regarded as the hypostatic union active in the work of man's redemption. Thus when Christ made atonement,

"It was in the character of one "made under the law" (Gal.iv.4) and "made sin for us" (2 Cor.v.21),....And as borne by one, the divinity of whose person and the merit of whose obedience imparted an infinite value to his offering of himself."¹

That the hypostatic union is the essential basis for Christ's atoning work is clearly brought out in Candlish's stress on Christ as "the one mediator between God and man." In his understanding of Christ as the mediator, Candlish lays great emphasis on the fact that it is on the basis of the hypostatic union that Christ is fitted for the task of being both the mediator and the mediation. All of this is expounded in a sermon on first Timothy 2:5, entitled The Man Christ Jesus. Speaking of the fitness of Christ to discharge the office of mediator, he says:

"He is the man to mediate between God and man. To be the one mediator, he must be pre-eminently and distinctively the man; the representative man; the one man. The man, not only as being the one alone among his human fellows competent to be their head, gathering up in himself their common nature... but as being the one alone of all men whom God owns as his fellow, sharing in common with him the divine nature, undivided, unalloyed, unchanged."²

As we shall see, Candlish was greatly influenced in his doctrine of the Atonement by Calvin. This influence is wide and varied, but nowhere is it more apparent than in Candlish's debt to the great Genevan Reformer in shaping his understanding of the relation of the hypostatic union to the work of the mediator. Calvin was wont to underline the fact that the atoning work of the mediator, Jesus Christ, had its basis in the hypostatic union of the God-man.³ Calvin taught that the mediator has two distinct natures united in His one person. Such a union is necessary, since only One who has both true

1 - The Atonement - p.326.

2 - Sermons by the Late Robert Smith Candlish. D.D. - p.34.

3 - The Institutes - John Calvin - 2:12:1-4.

God and true man, could bridge the gulf between God and man caused by sin.

"Now it has been of the greatest importance for us that he who was to be our Mediator is both true God and true man."¹...."This will become even clearer if we call to mind that what the Mediator was to accomplish was no common thing. His task was so to restore us to God's grace as to make of the children of men, children of God; of the heirs of Gehenna, heirs of the Heavenly Kingdom. Who could have done this had not the self-same Son of God become the Son of Man, and had not so taken what was ours as to impart what was his to us, and to make what was his by nature ours by grace?....Ungrudgingly he took our nature upon himself to impart to us what was his, and to become both Son of God and Son of man..."²

And on the same theme Calvin continues:

"For the same reason it was also imperative that he who was to become our Redeemer be true God and true man. It was his task to swallow up death. Who but the Life could do this? It was his task to conquer sin. Who but very Righteousness could do this? It was his task to rout the powers of world and air. Who but a power higher than world and air could do this?"³

And again Calvin writes:

"The second requirement of our reconciliation with God was this: that man, who by his disobedience had become lost, should by way of remedy counter it with obedience, satisfy God's judgment, and pay the penalties for sin. Accordingly, our Lord came forth as true man and took the person and the name of Adam in order to take Adam's place in obeying the Father, to present our flesh as the price of satisfaction to God's righteous judgment, and, in the same flesh, to pay the penalty that we had deserved. In short, since neither as God alone could he feel death, nor as man alone could he overcome it, he coupled human nature with divine that to atone for sin he might submit the weakness of the one to death; and that, wrestling with death by the power of the other nature, he might win victory for us."⁴

For Calvin then, the hypostatic union is determinative in the work of Christ. For

"His work of reconciliation....the two natures were both necessary: the divine in order to carry out the work that no man could perform; the human, that acting in our place He might include us with Him in what He accomplished."⁵

1 - Op.cit. - 2:12:1, p.464.

2 - Op.cit. - 2:12:2, p.465.

3 - Op.cit. - 2:12:2, p.466.

4 - Op.cit. - 2:12:3, p.466

5 - Christ in Our Place - Paul van Buren. Oliver & Boyd: Edinburgh: 1957 - p.20

For Calvin,

"Christ is our Redeemer in and through His humanity, but only because He is first of all God."¹

But for Calvin,

"It is in the unity of the two natures that we are to see the Mediator, and Calvin insists that in the Bible, 'those things which relate to the office of Mediator do not apply simply to His divinity or simply to His human nature.'"²

In a word, Calvin sees the hypostatic union as the necessary presupposition for the work of Christ as the Mediator between God and man.

This stress on the hypostatic union as the basis of Christ's atoning work is one that is essential if we are to understand the relation between His saving humanity and His saving deity. Atonement is the work of Christ as both true man and true God. His humanity is essential to our salvation. The Word became flesh in order to reveal God and reconcile men to God. Thus an imperfect manhood would result in an imperfect atonement. On the other hand, the deity of Christ the God-man guarantees that the work of revelation and reconciliation is real in its objective side. The work of the Mediator is not just the work of man, it is also, and indeed, primarily, the work of God. His deity assures us that His revealing, reconciling, and atoning acts are the eternal acts of God Himself. On the other hand, His humanity guarantees the actuality of revelation, while His deity guarantees the Divine content of that revelation. The same truth expressed differently would be: His humanity has no revealing or saving significance apart from His deity; while His deity has no revealing or saving significance apart from His humanity. Indeed, without the hypostatic union it would be impossible for man to receive God's revelation. Thus the significance of the atonement lies in the fact that here God has wrought an act from the side of God, as God, and from the side of man, as man. There are not, however, two actions involved here, only

1 - Op.cit. - p.21.

2 - Op.cit. - p.21

one, the action of the Mediator who is the God-man. This means that Candlish was right when he insisted that atonement was only possible on the ground of the hypostatic union, and that in point of fact the doctrine of the two natures united in the one Person of Christ, lies at the very heart of Christ's atoning work.¹

1 - I owe the substance of this last paragraph to lecture notes taken in a course on Christology & Soteriology given by Professor T. F. Torrance at New College, Edinburgh.

b) Christ's Atoning Work is a Satisfaction to Divine Justice

In Candlish's exposition of Christ's atoning work, one of the expressions most frequently used to expound that doctrine is that of Christ's work viewed as a 'satisfaction.' Candlish regards the atoning work of Christ as in some way, ~~providing~~ a real satisfaction.

"I start", he says in one place, "with the assumption of the Atonement made by Christ at his first coming, being a real satisfaction to Divine justice through his real substitution of himself in the room of the guilty."¹

He can speak of,

"his atoning blood shed for the remission of sins (which) has satisfied divine justice and opened the way to the Father."²

He criticizes F. D. Maurice because,

"The Atonement is in his teaching stripped of every vestige of the idea of a real satisfaction to Divine justice."³

In a passage where he discusses the "Father's justice" Candlish speaks of

"Jesus, our shepherd....satisfying that justice."⁴

He describes the death of Christ as

"being what no other death ever was, or ever can be, a real satisfaction to offended justice."⁵

In a description of Christ's work as our 'kinsman-redeemer', Candlish writes:

"He freely consents to underlie my guilt and to expiate it by a suitable and sufficient satisfaction; giving himself to me as my substitute, and accepted as such by the Father."⁶

And in the same volume, he makes reference to

"Christ's gracious substitution for us...which...is felt to satisfy divine justice."⁷

1 - The Two Great Commandments - R. S. Candlish - p.xiv.

2 - The Book of Genesis - Vol.1 - R.S. Candlish - p.219.

3 - A Letter to the Right Hon. the Earl of Shaftesbury on Mr. Maurice's Republished Defence of Himself - p.15.

4 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - R. S. Candlish - p.63.

5 - The First Epistle of John - R. S. Candlish - p.182.

6 - The Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - pp.18-19.

7 - Op.cit. - p.105.

From the above selection of passages dealing with 'satisfaction' which might have been endlessly multiplied, it becomes apparent that the concept of satisfaction in the atoning work of Christ, is, for Candlish, a fundamental one. The question remains, however, what exactly did Candlish mean by the satisfaction made by Christ through His atoning work? What content does he give to this highly-charged theological conception of satisfaction? Perhaps it may be as well to begin by stating that the death of Christ as a satisfaction for sin has nothing to do with the paying of a ransom to the devil. Satisfaction is made to God the Father, and not to Satan. Thus he writes:

"The redemption through Christ's blood can have no reference to.....Satan...as the potentate who has taken men prisoners;.... Redemption through Christ's blood may be thought...to be something of the nature of a price paid, or a ransom given, in order that he, being satisfied or appeased by the cruel death of so great a champion on their behalf, may be induced to let his victims go free. There is no room for any such imagination if the redemption through Christ's blood is held to be identical with the forgiveness of sins....(It) is .. incompatible with the divine prerogative in the forgiveness of sins..the notion of its being a dealing with Satan to ransom them out of his hands. God cannot be obliged, or bribed, or coaxed to forgive sins. If he were it would be no forgiveness at all."¹

And on the same subject in another volume, Candlish writes:

"But the death through which he affected this release is his giving himself as a ransom for many, not to the adversary, but to the Father."²

Thus, whatever else is meant by satisfaction in Christ's atoning work, this much is certain for Candlish, it has nothing whatsoever to do with making satisfaction by paying a ransom to Satan. Satisfaction is satisfaction made to God the Father. Indeed, as may be seen from all of the seven quotations made above from his writings, Candlish underlines the fact that satisfaction is a 'satisfaction to Divine justice.' But the question still

1 - Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians - R. S. Candlish - pp.19-20.

2 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - R. S. Candlish - p.62.

must needs be answered, just how does Candlish view this satisfaction of Christ to the Divine justice of the Father? Does he view satisfaction as it was interpreted in terms of Roman Law, as, e.g., in the theology of Tertullian and Anselm? Or does he view Christ's satisfaction whereby He meets the righteous requirements of God, as expounded in the Epistle to the Romans? Here we must confess to meeting with an inconsistency in the theology of Candlish. In an earlier book, Candlish sets his seal of approval on a definition of satisfaction which has its origins not in Pauline theology, but in Roman jurisprudence. We quote the passage lifted from Principal Hill's Lectures on Divinity:

"although the sufferings of Jesus Christ, in consequence of this translation of guilt, became the punishment of sin, it is plain that they are not that very punishment which the sin deserved; and hence it is that they are called by those who hold the Catholic opinion a satisfaction for the sins of the world. The word 'satisfaction' is known in the Roman Law, from which it is borrowed, to denote that method of fulfilling an obligation which may either be admitted or refused. When a person, by the non-performance of a contract, has incurred a penalty, he is entitled to a discharge of the contract, if he pays the penalty; but if, instead of paying the penalty itself, he offers something in place of it, the person who has a right to demand the penalty may grant a discharge or not, as he sees meet. If he is satisfied with that which is offered, he will grant the discharge; if he is not satisfied, he cannot be called unjust; he may act wisely in refusing it. According to this known meaning of the word, the sufferings of Christ for sin have received the name of a satisfaction to the justice of God, because they were not that penalty that had been incurred, but were something accepted by the law-giver instead of it."¹

If this represents Candlish's view of the satisfaction of Christ, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that he, like

"Tertullian regards...satisfaction as a meritorious work."²

To see Christ's satisfaction in terms of the Roman law and its view of satisfaction, as Candlish certainly appears to do in the above passage, is

1 - The Atonement - R. S. Candlish - pp.xi-xii.

2 - The Work of Christ - R. S. Franks - p.81.

surely to be guilty of identifying satisfaction with the notion of merit. Consequentially this leads, as in the case of Tertullian, to an interpretation of satisfaction in which God is thought of as being appeased in order to merit forgiveness. Furthermore, logically this means that God needs to be placated in order to be gracious. Grace is no longer free but is conditional. This, of course, was the view of satisfaction taken by both Tertullian and Anselm. But as we have already seen, this is a view that Candlish vigorously rejects in other writings. "God cannot be obliged, or bribed, or coaxed to forgive sins." And in his book on The Atonement, Candlish in speaking about the

"death of his Son as a satisfaction to divine justice and a propitiation for human guilt", can say, "The Father is not induced or persuaded to bestow benefits on men by a price paid to him."¹

Thus Candlish is very sure that God does not need to be conditioned to be gracious. Indeed, atonement, as we have seen, flows from love. God is antecedently gracious and needs not to be appeased or placated in order to provide atonement and mediate forgiveness to men. It would appear then, that there is something of a contradiction, or at least a basic inconsistency in Candlish's view of the satisfaction that Christ makes to Divine justice.

It is the contention of this writer that Candlish's view of satisfaction in the context of Christ's work is really much more in line with the theology of the Epistle of the Romans than with a view of satisfaction founded on Roman jurisprudence.²

1 - The Atonement - R. S. Candlish - p.192.

2 - This inconsistency stems from Candlish being influenced by Principal Hill's "Federal" view of 'Satisfaction'.

Candlish sees the whole question of satisfaction to Divine justice as being raised because of man's sin. Candlish views sin as man's disobedience to God's righteous requirements. Sin is the transgression of the law of God, and as such, satisfaction must be made to the Divine justice. This relationship between God's holy law and satisfaction is emphasized again and again in Candlish's writings. He speaks in one place of

"Christ's fulfilment of all righteousness...by his voluntary and vicarious obedience, and his satisfying the law by his atoning sufferings and death."¹

He writes of

"The removal of the sentence of condemnation....in terms of the law perfectly fulfilled, adequately satisfied."²

He stresses how Christ

"by keeping the whole law of righteousness and becoming obedient unto death...thus on your behalf, made satisfaction to...God."³

And in his volume on Genesis he writes of

"that perfect and all-sufficient righteousness which consists of the very person of the Son himself, as manifested in our nature, and satisfying on our behalf the righteous claims of the law, being the Lamb of God and the propitiation for the sins of the world."⁴

And in his book in which he seeks to answer F. D. Maurice, Candlish writes:

"We speak, indeed, of the justice of God, or his holy law being satisfied - its claims being met, - its violated majesty being vindicated, - when sin is punished."⁵

In these and other passages,⁶ Candlish lays the emphasis upon satisfaction in terms of Christ having through His perfect obedience, satisfied the demands of the law in our place. In other words, the emphasis here is away from legal notions of satisfaction as in Tertullian and Anselm, and is on the Pauline notion of satisfaction whereby Christ meets the requirements of God's

1 - Sermons by the Late R. S. Candlish, D.D. - p.132.

2 - Conscience and the Bible - A Lecture by R. S. Candlish - p.33.

3 - The Son of Man Lord of the Sabbath - A Sermon - p.12.

4 - The Book of Genesis - Vol.1, p.279

5 - Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays - p.230.

6 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - p.254, e.g.

righteousness which we were unable to do, and in so doing, fulfils the law and righteousness on our behalf. It is in this Pauline sense that Candlish seems to understand satisfaction which is made to the Divine justice. This, of course, is a far cry from any legal or meritorious notion of satisfaction. In the Pauline view Christ satisfies the Divine justice precisely because God has actually met His own requirements in the Person of the God-man. If our understanding of Candlish's view of satisfaction in terms of the theology of the Epistle to the Romans is the right one, his view then brings him into line with Calvin's view of satisfaction. When Calvin teaches that

"the satisfaction for our sins was accomplished by the Cross",¹ there is no thought of Christ satisfying the Divine justice in terms of the appeasing of an angry God. Such a concept would be impossible in Calvin's theology since he stresses the fact that in the work of atonement, the Father and Son are united. Thus

"Whatever else it may mean, satisfaction cannot imply any opposition between Father and Son, for that would be an opposition of God with Himself."²....."This is the framework within which we must understand Calvin's use of the word satisfaction: the unity of the Father and the Son, the love of the Father for the Son, and His love for us that was so great that He gave His Son for our redemption."³

Calvin thinks of satisfaction in terms of the perfect obedience that Christ rendered on our behalf thus fulfilling God's demand for a perfect righteousness which we could never fulfil, but which He does fulfil in our place:

"...man, who by his disobedience had become lost, should by way of remedy counter it with obedience, satisfy God's judgment and pay the penalties for sin."

But because man is unable to do this because he is a sinner,

"our Lord came forth as true man and took the person and the name of Adam in order to take Adam's place in obeying the Father, to present our flesh as the price of satisfaction to God's righteous judgment, and in the same flesh, to pay the penalty that we had deserved."⁴

1 - Calvin's Commentary on Rom.4:25 quoted in: Christ in our Place - P.van Buren - p.74.

2 - Op.cit. p.74.

3 - Op.cit. - p.75.

4 - The Institutes - 2:12:3. p.466.

For Calvin then, God is the absolutely Righteous One who demands righteousness and obedience from man. But man the sinner is unable to render this righteousness and obedience which God demands. But in the fulness of time Christ comes forth to render that perfect obedience and fulfil that perfect righteousness on our behalf, thus satisfying the righteous demands of the law of God. Calvin may be using the language of Tertullian and Anselm, but the thought is that of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, where God acting in Christ meets His own requirements whereby satisfaction to the Divine justice is duly rendered.¹

In spite then of the seeming inconsistency in Candlish's understanding of the meaning of satisfaction, we adhere to the view that, following Calvin, and in terms of the theology of the Epistle to the Romans, Candlish really interprets satisfaction in a Biblical and not in a legal manner.

1 - But cf. Aulén and Wendel for another view.

c) In His Atoning Work Christ is Both Substitute & Representative

Candlish would have wholeheartedly agreed with H. M. Relton who wrote:

"No theory of the Atonement rings true either to the Biblical teaching or to the deepest experience of the penitent heart which fails to do justice to this element of substitution in the Cross of Calvary."¹

For in Candlish's theology of the Atonement, the thought of Christ as our Substitute is quite central. Candlish was very sure that the work of Christ in atonement was basically a substitutionary act in which the Mediator did on behalf of sinful men, something, which by nature, they were quite incapable of doing for themselves. Candlish believed profoundly that

"the term 'Substitute' emphasizes the fact that there is something from which Jesus in His death saves the sinner - something with which we ourselves could not deal, with which He alone could deal...in death at the hands of sinners."²

In speaking of the work of Christ, Candlish writes:

"That work consists of His obedience unto death; His fulfilment of all righteousness, and His endurance of the cross, in the room and stead of the guilty whose substitute He was appointed by the Father, and himself freely consented to become. The burden, which as a servant, he willingly had imposed on him, was the burden of your breach of the law, which he had to repair, your want of all righteousness, which he had to supply, and, above all,...your sin, which he had to bear in his own body on the cross."³

The very nerve of atonement, taught Candlish, lies in the fact that He was

"willing to take your place, and be your substitute; and fulfil all your obligations, and meet all your responsibilities."⁴

For Candlish,

"substitution...is the essence of an atonement."⁵

1 - Quoted in: The Cross in the New Testament - L. Morris - p.418.

2 - Op.cit. - quoted on p.281.

3 - A Sermon Preached by R. S. Candlish at the Opening of Free St. George's Church, Lothian Road, Edinburgh - p.8.

4 - Sermons by the Late R. S. Candlish, D.D. - p.36.

5 - Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays - p.225.

This work of Substitution which Christ does for us sinful men, can be understood only in Biblical and theological terms. There is no help, writes Candlish, to be gained, no insights to be gleaned, as to the nature of this substitutionary act, by looking to human analogies. The truth is that there are simply no human analogies to Christ's work of Substitution. And that for three reasons. First, in Christ's substitutionary act we have the acceptance of the Lawgiver, God. Second, we have the consent of the Substitute himself. Third, the unique person of the Substitute is that of the God-man. He writes:

"..in everything which seems to approach to a substitution amongst men, there is wanting that concurrence of the acceptance of the lawgiver, and the consent of the substitute, without which substitution is illegal. But these two circumstances meet in the substitution of Christ..... "Jesus Christ was capable of giving his consent to suffer and to die for the sins of men, because he had that power over his life which a mere man cannot have. Death did not come upon him by the condition of his being, but having existed from all ages in the form of God, he assumed, at a particular season, the fashion of a man for this very cause, that he might suffer and die."¹

For Candlish then, these three factors, the acceptance of the Lawgiver, the Father, the consent of the Substitute himself, and the unique nature of the Substitute who was the God-man, render the substitutionary work of Christ as absolutely unique, and not able to be compared with human categories of substitution.

In his doctrine of substitution, Candlish making much use of legal or forensic categories, laid great emphasis upon the penal aspect of Christ's death.

Taking his cue from the Apostle Paul and the teaching of the Reformers, he thought of man as having broken the law of God through sin and thus exposing himself to the Divine wrath or punishment. Then he saw Christ as our Substitute paying the penalty of our sin by His atoning death, so that our justification and our forgiveness rest on the fact that the penalty for our

1 - The Atonement - R. S. Candlish - pp.xiii-xiv.

sin has been borne by the One who 'bore our sins in His own body on the tree.' Furthermore, since the penalty has been borne once for all, it cannot be ever imposed on us again.

Thus for Candlish, the substitution of Christ is principally a penal act arising out of the three related factors of sin, guilt, and punishment, all of which are dealt with by Christ on our behalf. The obligation to punishment - God takes a serious view of sin - which the human race has incurred by their sin, was assumed by the sinless Son of God on our behalf who bore our sins, took our punishment, and atoned for our guilt. The germ of all this is set down by Candlish in a quotation from Principal Hill.

"In the substitution of Jesus Christ, according to Catholic opinion, there is a translation of the guilt of the sinners to him; by which is not meant that he who was innocent became a sinner, but that what he suffered was upon account of sin. To perceive the reason for adopting this expression, you must carry in your minds a precise notion of the meaning of three words - sin, guilt, and punishment. Sin is the violation of the law; guilt is the desert of punishment which succeeds this violation; and punishment is the suffering in consequence of this desert. When you separate suffering from guilt, it ceases to be punishment, and becomes mere calamity or affliction; and although the Almighty may be conceived, by his sovereign dominion, to have the right of laying any measure of suffering upon any being, yet suffering, even when inflicted by Heaven, unless it is connected with guilt, does not attain the ends of punishment. In order, therefore, that the sufferings of the Son of God might be such as it became the Lawgiver of the universe to inflict, it was necessary that the sufferer, who had no sin of his own, should be considered and declared as taking upon him that obligation to punishment which the human race had incurred by their sins. Then his sufferings became punishment, - not, indeed, deserved by sins of his own, but due to him as bearing the sins of others."¹

Christ's death as one that involves penal substitution, was a theme that Candlish expounded again and again.

1 - The Atonement - p.xi.

"Christ died for our sins; by reason of them; on account of them. His death therefore was penal. It was the death which is the wages of sin. It was the death which we for our sins deserved to die. It was death by the sentence of the law; of the holy, unchangeable righteous law of God. To die for our sins is to be subjected to their penalty, their punishment. It is to be subjected to the curse, that is, the condemnation of the law. It is to bear the wrath of the lawgiver and judge. It is to suffer what Christ suffered when he uttered that exceeding bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!"....his death saves us from thus dying. He died for our sins; for the cancelling of their guilt, for the annulling of their criminality. His death being penal, is expiating and atoning. It is a real sacrifice of substitution. He takes the place of sinners. He dies for our sins instead of us. His dying for our sins is instead of our dying for them ourselves."¹

And later in the same volume, he returns to his theme again,

"the strictly penal and..expiatory nature of the sufferings and death of Christ" and writes: "He made our sins his own; he made them so thoroughly, so personally his own, when he died for them, that if he had continued in the state of death, he must have continued in these sins of ours still. They must have adhered to him to this day. Their whole guilt, and the entire debt or obligation of their punishment, he made his own, and took upon himself....He identified himself with us as sinners, as being dead in our sins. He substituted himself for us, becoming himself dead; condemned, and bearing the condemnation in our stead. This is what is meant by his being the propitiation for our sins."²

Candlish sees the substitutionary work of Christ bearing our sins not only in terms of Christ's penal death, but also in terms of his penal burial. Indeed, so thoroughly had He 'become sin for us' that Candlish taught that while he was in the grave, Christ was still bearing our sin. Indeed, right

"Up to the moment of the Resurrection he is bearing our sins."³

And,

"So thoroughly does he identify himself with us, so completely does he make our case his own, that not only our penal death is his, but our penal burial too. He died for our sins for he died in them. He was buried also in our sins."⁴

1 - Life in a Risen Saviour - R. S. Candlish - pp.16-17.

2 - Op. cit. - p.42.

3 - Op. cit. - p.46.

4 - Op. cit. - p.45.

Thus for Candlish, the work of bearing our sins, is not truly a 'finished work' until our Substitute has risen victoriously from the grave. Indeed, this was a favourite theme with Candlish, namely, that if Christ had not risen again from the dead and been thereby justified in the sight of God the Father as the Father's obedient Servant, we sinful men would still be in our sins. Candlish pointed to First Corinthians fifteen as teaching in the apostle's judgment, this fact,

"if there is no resurrection there is no justification."¹

If Christ did not rise from the dead, then His substitutionary penal act of bearing our sins is incomplete and we would not be justified in the sight of God. The apostolic doctrine of the atonement which Candlish summarizes as follows:

"The fundamental idea of guilt expiated, and the guilty justified, through union with him who, being made sin, died, and being the righteousness of God, rose again"²

can only be true because Christ rose again from the grave - a grave in which He had still been bearing our sins in His Penal burial.

In dealing with the question of Christ's substitutionary work in which he suffers the penalty due to our sin, Candlish raises the question as to the exact amount of Christ's sufferings in proportion to the sin which he bore. The exact nature of His sufferings must, says Candlish, be always shrouded in mystery, and beyond human comprehension. That His sufferings were adequate to atone for our sin, is the plain testimony of Scripture, and with that we may rest content. The doctrine of the strictly penal character of Christ's substitutionary death,

1 - Life in a Risen Saviour - p.122.

2 - Op.cit. - p.124.

"Rightly understood...does not raise the question either of the precise nature or of the exact amount of the sufferings which Christ endured on the cross; but only of the character which he sustained when he endured them, whatever they were, and the corresponding character which is to be assigned and ascribed to them. It was in the character of one "made under the law" (Gal.iv.4), and "made sin for us" (2 Cor.v.21), that he endured these sufferings; and therefore they were, in the strictest sense, penal and retributive. And as borne by one, the divinity of whose person and the merit of whose obedience, imparted an infinite value to his offering of himself, they exhausted the full penal and retributive sentence lying upon the guilty sinners whose place he took. As to the exact nature of these sufferings....it must ever be presumptuous to inquire. It was a good form that was employed in the old litanies: "By thine unknown sufferings, good Lord, deliver us." The sweat in the garden - the cry on the cross - speak volumes. Nor, as to the amount of these sufferings, need we at all incline to the idea of the striking of a balance, or the setting of an exact proportion or account, between the number of sins to be expiated, or of sinners to be redeemed, and the stripes inflicted on the Surety; as if his sufferings, weighed and measured to the value of each sigh and drop of blood were exactly adequate to the guilt of the transgressions of his people - neither more nor less...."¹.....The real question is, Did he obey, and did he suffer in a representative character? Was he "under the law?" In fulfilling all righteousness did he meet the positive demands of the law which his people had failed to meet? In enduring all his sufferings and submitting to the cross, did he receive the punishment due to his people? Was his righteousness a legal righteousness, and were his sufferings penal sufferings?"²

For Candlish then, lying at the very heart of atonement, we have Christ's substitutionary act whereby he takes the penalty of our sins upon himself. Indeed, with Irenaeus, Candlish sees Substitution in the Incarnation as well as in the death of Christ. For Candlish, the Incarnation itself is a substitutionary act in which Jesus Christ takes our place. Thus it is that Candlish can even say that the thought of substitution is that which truly harmonises Christ's work. Furthermore, he feels that apart from the doctrine of substitution, the death of Christ must remain a dark enigma. Speaking of Christ as

1 - The Atonement - pp.325-326.

2 - Op. cit. - pp.327-328.

"the substitute, surety, and saviour of the guilty" he says: "It was in this character that he came into the world....it was the single object for which he lived and died.....Every theory that has been or can be proposed of the suffering life and cruel death of Jesus, the Holy One of God, apart from the recognition of his vicarious character and standing, fails, and must fail, to satisfy... The whole story is a confused, inconsistent, inextricable, incomprehensible enigma; a dark riddle as regards the government of God.... It is the doctrine, or rather the fact, of his substitution for you, which alone harmonises and hallows all.....It is the atonement that gives significance and unity to the whole. Let him be owned as the righteousness of God, in your stead, and the propitiation for your sins,....Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."¹

To the doctrine of Christ's substitutionary work in taking the penal consequences of our sin, there is much stout resistance offered in theological circles today as in every age. One only needs to consult the standard works on the atonement to discover that there is much opposition to the doctrine of substitution as set forth by Candlish. This in spite of the fact that substitution is clearly taught in the New Testament. Indeed, the lexicographers are in substantial agreement that the central words in the New Testament used for redemption, and their Old Testament origins, yield the sense of substitution.²

In emphasizing the thought of Christ's work on the Cross as a substitutionary act in which He as the sin-bearer takes our penalty upon himself, Candlish was at one with the teaching of Paul the apostle. Even those scholars who deny substitution as a legitimate way of expressing the meaning of Christ's work, are forced to admit that, like it or not, the thought is to be found in the Pauline theology, and not only on the circumference of his thinking, but right at the very centre. Leon Morris, after examining a number of Pauline passages from Galatians, Second Corinthians, Romans, and First Timothy, states simply,

"The thought of substitution is clear in the Pauline writings."³

1 - Sermons by the Late R. S. Candlish, D.D. - p.45.

2 - Leon Morris brings this out well in his book, The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross.

3 - The Cross in the New Testament - L. Morris - p.380.

The same thought is to be found, if not so marked, yet nevertheless plain to be seen, in the First Epistle of Peter. This is brought out by the apostle especially in 2:24-25 of the epistle with its overtones of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. Commenting on this passage Morris says,

"And when Peter tells us that Jesus 'bare our sins in his body on the tree' there ought not to be the slightest doubt but that he is using this familiar Old Testament manner of speaking. He means that Jesus in His death endured the penalty for our sins. Lest there be misunderstanding he adds, 'by whose stripes ye were healed'. Because He suffered we do not suffer. Because He bore our sins we bear them no more."¹

Morris adds a footnote in which he cites the authority of C. E. B. Cranfield who comments on this same passage as follows:

"The bearing of our sins means suffering the punishment of them in our place."²

Furthermore, this same thought of substitution in the work of Christ can be seen in the thought of Jesus Himself. The classic example is of course the 'ransom' passage in Mark 10:45 with its reference to Jesus and His substitutionary giving of His life taken straight from Isaiah 53. Most scholars today would agree that in this 'ransom' passage, Jesus sees the Suffering Servant of Isaiah fulfilled in His own life and death. In his book, The Work and Words of Jesus, A. M. Hunter asserts that substitution is to be found in Christ's own teaching. In this book where he has been discussing the three types of theory of the atonement, he says of one of them:

"Under this head, we may include all theories which deal in "satisfaction" or substitution, or make use of "the sacrificial principle." It is with this type of theory that the sayings of Jesus seem best to agree. There can be little doubt that Jesus viewed His death as a representative sacrifice for "the many." Not only is His thought saturated in Isa. lii (which is a doctrine of representative suffering), but His words over the cup - indeed the whole narrative of the Lord's Supper - almost demand to be interpreted in terms of a sacrifice in whose virtue

1 - Op. cit. - pp. 324-325.

2 - Op. cit. - p. 325.

His followers can share. The idea of substitution which is prominent in Isa. lili, appears in the ransom saying. And it requires only a little reading between the lines to find in the "cup" sayings, the story of the Agony, and the cry of dereliction, evidence that Christ's sufferings were what, for lack of a better word, we can only call "penal".¹

Candlish in thus emphasizing Christ's death as a substitutionary work on behalf of sinful men, is clearly in line with the teaching of the New Testament. Furthermore, this same view has always commended itself to the Church in every age since the days of the early Church. Professor William Barclay in one of his books, defines substitution as follows:

"The substitutionary view of the work of Jesus holds definitely and distinctly that Jesus Christ on his Cross bore the penalty and the punishment for sin which we should have borne, and that he did so as an act of voluntary and spontaneous and sacrificial love."²

He admits that many recoil from this view, but goes on to say that two things must be said:

"First, there is the quite general truth that the heart of man witnesses that there is something here which is fundamentally true...The second general truth is this: this is an interpretation and understanding of the Cross which has existed without break since the beginning of Christian thought."³

As evidence of this last point, Barclay cites 'substitutionary' passages from Paul, Tertullian, Cyprian, Hilary, Ambrose, and Augustine, and concludes by saying:

"There is no age in Christian thought to which the idea of Jesus Christ as the Saviour, whose death was voluntary, vicarious, sacrificial, substitutionary, has not been dear."⁴

This doctrine of substitution which stresses the penalty borne by Christ on

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- 1 - The Work and Words of Jesus - A. M. Hunter, London: S.C.M. Press: 1956 - p.100.
 - 2 - Crucified and Crowned - William Barclay, London: S.C.M. Press: 1961 - p.116.
 - 3 - Op. cit. - pp.117f.
 - 4 - Op. cit. - p.118.

our behalf is often attacked as being an 'immoral' concept, which at best, leaves us with an imputed righteousness that is nothing more than a mere legal fiction. Thus in speaking about,

"..that wondrous transaction which was consummated and finished on Calvary; the substitution of the innocent and holy Son of God and Son of man in your room and stead; the transference of your guilt, the demerit...and guilt, of your sins from you to him; and his endurance of the curse, and as your representative; that you might not die but live; in a word, his being made sin for you, who knew no sin, that you might be made the righteousness of God in him..."

Candlish realizes only too well that such a 'wondrous transaction' is sometimes conceived of in heathen terms, resulting in

"a sort of fictitious legal plea of imputed righteousness and vicarious merit..."

But, continues Candlish,

"you have not so learned Christ.....You see in that scene on Calvary, that negotiation of your peace between the Father and the Son, something very different from mere power withstood and vengeance satiated. To you it shines all radiant with the beams of unspotted righteousness and holy love."¹

And Candlish never leaves us in doubt for a moment, that the charge of our righteousness through Christ's substitutionary death being only an imputed legal righteousness, is met and refuted by the doctrine of our union with Christ. Thus he continues the quotation above by saying:

"The same Eternal Spirit through whom Christ offers himself without spot to God, is upon you and in you. It is he, the Eternal Spirit, who joins you to Christ.....It is he who originates and sustains a real living personal union between you and Christ."²

This Christological imputation of Christ's righteousness won for us through His substitutionary death and made a great reality to us by union with our crucified and living Head, is an emphasis that is common in Candlish's teaching. Speaking on this theme, he writes elsewhere:

1 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - R. S. Candlish - pp.366-367.

2 - Op. cit. - p.367.

"Righteousness; his own righteousness; the righteousness brought in by his own dear Son; the righteousness of his holy personality, as God-man; his perfect fulfilment of the law's requirements, as the Father's servant, on our account; his endurance of its sentence of penal death as made sin, made a curse for us; this righteousness is imputed to us, placed to our account. Not that it passes from him to us, but that we are in him and have it in him;...So I am complete in Christ, in him as made sin for me, though he knew no sin, that I might be made the righteousness of God in him; he sin for me, I the righteousness of God in him."¹

And in the same volume, Candlish writes:

"The Son, the subject, the criminal; the Son appointed heir of all things, the subject bound to obey, the criminal laden with the guilt of disobedience - these are the successive aspects in which he appears. You are called to joint participation with him in these three positions - as the criminal, the subject, the Son; the criminal taking your condemnation on himself. There is therefore now no condemnation to you who are in Christ, the subject rendering all obedience in your stead; in whose righteousness you are righteous, the Son appointed on your behalf to be heir of all things, with whom, as sons in him, you are joint-heirs."²

This same relationship between the righteousness which Christ gained for us through His substitutionary death and our union with him, is stressed in Candlish's expository commentary on Ephesians. Here is a quite typical example:

"And thus...does he quicken you who are in Christ. For you are crucified with Christ. You partake with him in the penal death which he took upon himself. You make it your own in him...There is now no condemnation to you who are in Christ. God quickens you together with him."³

This relationship between Christ's substitutionary death for us sinners, and our union with him through faith and the work of the Spirit, is an emphasis made also by Calvin. Indeed, perhaps it is here that the source of Candlish's emphasis is revealed. Paul Van Buren in defining Calvin's position with respect to the connection between substitution and union with Christ has this to say:

1 - Op. cit. - pp.187-188.

2 - Op. cit. - p.293.

3 - Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians - R. S. Candlish - p.5.

"By standing in our place, Christ has not simply endured our punishment for us, so that we might be set free to go our own way but He has set us in an indissoluble relation to Himself, so that we are bound to Him. By the very closeness of this union, comparable to the union between a body and its head, the death of a part is the death of the whole. Only the head need die for the whole body to die. And if the head then be given life on behalf of the body, that body is already on the way to life, although the full realization of this life may be delayed. But all this is true only so long as the body is in union with the head. Thus we are never to regard ourselves apart from Christ, even as God never regards us apart from Him."¹

Like Calvin, Candlish saw quite clearly that the substitutionary work of Christ is not a work that takes place outside of us to be subsequently applied to us! The substitutionary bearing of the penalty of our sins is only real and vital for Candlish, precisely because there is a very close bond uniting the Substitute with those for whom He substitutes Himself. This close bond is our union with Christ. As Leon Morris says:

"The biblical substitution is not a purely external, more or less academic kind of substitution. It is a substitution in which the believer is existentially involved. He is caught up in the struggle. He is transformed. Substitution is inclusive."²

That Christ's substitution has no affinity whatsoever with the heathen notions of substitution and propitiation, was a subject to which Candlish turned again and again. The vast differences could be seen when we realized that, firstly, Christ's atoning work of substitution flowed from love. Indeed, Candlish can say that,

"..the endurance of that wrath or punishment by Christ, came from his acknowledging that it proceeded from love..."³

Indeed, the whole atoning act of God from start to finish is not the work of a loving Son propitiating an angry Father, but a sheer work of grace in which

1 - Christ in our Place - P.van Buren - p.87

2 - The Cross in the New Testament - L. Morris - p.417.

3 - Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays - p.224.

both the Father and Son are involved in a loving partnership. Thus Candlish can speak of:

"The grace, the infinite love, implied in the Father's giving his Son to be our ransom, and in the Son's consenting to represent us in that capacity; the grace, quite gratuitous and free, of the Father's acceptance of us, even on that footing, as righteous in his sight; - for it is all of grace that he accepts the Son as our substitute, and accepts us in him accordingly; - the grace which, accepting us in the beloved, not only blots out all our sins and cancels all their guilt, but treats us as having never sinned or contracted guilt at all; nay, as having fulfilled all righteousness; ..."¹

We have spent much time on the substitutionary aspect of the atonement in Candlish's thinking, not because substitution exhausts Candlish's doctrine of atonement, but because it does play a very important part in his total understanding of atonement. In his emphasis upon substitution, Candlish is - and he was well aware of this - laying emphasis upon the legal and forensic aspect of atonement which looms so large in the New Testament, especially in the writings of Paul. In developing the substitutionary character of Christ's atoning work, Candlish was seeking to do justice to that aspect of atonement whereby Christ the Mediator, who is both priest and priestly offering at the same time, takes our place because of our sin, and bearing the penalty of our sins, atones by His expiatory death on the Cross. Here, of course, the emphasis is upon the passive obedience of Christ. But Candlish stressed more than the passive obedience of Christ in his doctrine of atonement. Fully conscious of the centrality of Christ's passive obedience in Scripture, he sought to expound this aspect of the atonement in all its glory, but in so doing, Candlish never lost sight of the importance of the active obedience of Christ which also forms an important aspect of atonement. With Calvin, Candlish saw that it was by 'the whole course of his obedience', that Christ makes atonement, and thus

1 - On the Sonship & Brotherhood of Believers - p.104.

he was led to stress the role of Christ in terms of His representation, as well as in terms of His substitution. What Christ did, He did on our behalf, as our substitute, but just as important for Candlish was the fact that what Christ did He did as one of us. His atoning work is both a work of substitution and a work of representation. In seeing the necessity of viewing Christ's work as a work of substitution and a work of representation, Candlish thus avoided the error of seeing the doctrine of atonement in too forensic a way. The temptation to stress substitution as providing the key to the full understanding of atonement is one that has not always been resisted in Scottish theology. This was precisely the error of the Federal theology, which ignored the doctrine of the incarnation in relation to atonement, misconstrued the doctrine of our union with Christ, and thus finished up with a wholly legal view of the atonement which emphasized substitution at the expense of representation. Even James Denney, that master theologian of Scotland, whose works on the atonement, in some respects, have hardly been bettered in Scotland, fell into this same error. By failing to give the doctrine of the Incarnation its proper place; by laying total emphasis upon the passive obedience of Christ; and as a consequence, failing to find a place in his doctrine of the atonement for union with Christ, Denney was also guilty of emphasizing substitution at the expense of representation. With Candlish it was very different indeed:

"We do not admit the substitution of Christ in the room of the guilty to be artificial. We believe it to be real and actual. We believe it to be the gracious appointment of the sovereign will of God. And we believe that because Christ is the actual representative of men, he is on that very account qualified to be their substitute."¹ (my italics)

In expounding the text, 'I lay down my life for the sheep', Candlish writes,

"Viewing his death in the light of his relation to the sheep, for whom, in obedience to the Father, he lays down his

1 - Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays - p.229.

life, it is to be regarded as forming the principal part..... of his passive obedience and righteousness; his propitiatory or atoning sacrifice. He lays down his life for the sheep, as not only the obedient servant of the Father, but the representative and surety of the sheep. For the fact of his substitution in their stead is here declared."¹

In another place, he speaks about

"the substitution of the...Son of God and Son of Man in your room and stead....and his endurance of the curse, the condemnation, the penal death, for you..as your representative."²

He combines the thought of substitution and representation when he speaks of,

"the sacrifice, the vicarious and expiatory suffering of the representative of man, the substitute for man, - the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all..."³

He reminds us how important it is to

"consider in what character Christ died and rose again. He was not an isolated individual, acting or transacting with the Father, in that great trial...He bore a representative character. He had gathered up in his one single person all the interests of his people. He was theirs, in that day, and they were his; he their proxy, surety, substitute; they his property, his members, part and parcel of himself."⁴

Much has been written - and indeed the debate continues today - concerning the respective merits of the two terms, 'substitution', and 'representation', as suitable words for expressing the character of Christ's work for us sinful men. Scholars have taken up the position that substitution alone is capable of expounding the depths of the theology of the Cross, while there have not been wanting theologians who have vehemently affirmed that representation best sets forth the truth of Christ's work in the atonement. Leon Morris is probably right when he asserts that in the main,

"The whole idea of substitution is out of favour in recent discussions,"⁵

1 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - p.62.

2 - Op. cit. - p.366.

3 - Examination of Mr. Maurice's Theological Essays - pp.230-231.

4 - Sermons by the Late R. S. Candlish, D.D. - p.271.

5 - The Cross in the New Testament - L. Morris - p.407. But cf. Heirs of the Reformation - J. De Senarclens pp.238-239 and esp. footnote #1 on pp.238-239.

and that most scholars tend to favour the idea of representation to describe Christ's atoning work. It is the contention of the writer that Candlish was indisputably right in believing that both substitution and representation are necessary to express the fulness of Christ's work. The thought of Christ as our Substitute lays itself open to the charge, when taken alone, of failing to show that Christ in dying on the Cross died "as one of us." As we have seen, historically this leads to an undue emphasis upon forensic categories of atonement, together with a tendency to neglect the all-important doctrine of union with Christ. On the other hand, the term representation, fails to stress adequately the fact that Christ did something for us that we are quite incapable of doing for ourselves. Furthermore, the term representative, suggests someone who merely stands in for someone else, who, if the circumstances had been more propitious, could have carried out the assignment by himself. This point may be illustrated by the practice of the Queen sending a representative to do, on her behalf, what she might easily have done by herself just as well, if, indeed, not better. Also,

"to speak of Christ as "the representative man" causes us... to picture immediately a relationship originating from man as its source. A representative sums up, so to say, what exists in those whom he represents: he acts for those who stand behind him in accordance with the inspiration and instructions they transmit to him, translating these into whatever speech or action successive occasions may require; and such a relationship is constructed and construed, be it noted, along a line which starts from the constituency, not from the representative himself."¹

A. B. Macaulay has a similar criticism of the use of representative used as an exclusive term to describe the work of Christ in the atonement.

"Representative" is a term which appeals to many as covering the ground less ambiguously than any other. Certainly Jesus is our Representative - He is the Head and we are the members. He

1 - Quoted in: The Cross in the New Testament - pp.408-409.

represents us, who cannot undertake the office for ourselves, in what McLeod Campbell calls "dealing with God on behalf of men." But while it registers so to speak, the fact of "His dealing with God on our behalf," it fails to express the unique character of that "dealing." It rather tends to suggest that He is on the same level with us, and that what He did in "His dealing with God" concerned Himself equally with us. It does not do justice to all that is involved in the prepositional phrases "for us," and (especially) "for our sins"; "He died for our sins."¹

This is why we also need the term substitution, for

"the term 'Substitute' emphasizes the fact that there is something from which Jesus in His death saves the sinner - something with which we ourselves could not deal, which He alone could deal.... in 'a perfected personal experience' in death at the hands of sinners..."²

Happily, there is no need to choose between 'substitution' or 'representation.' Here it is not a case of 'either/or', but a case of 'both/and'. The doctrine of Christ as our Representative is one that stresses the active obedience of Christ, and the incarnational aspect of atonement. As such it is a highly important and integral part of any full doctrine of Christ's work. On the other hand, Christ's work viewed as a substitutionary act stresses the forensic aspect of atonement, the passive obedience of Christ. Both the incarnational and the forensic aspects of atonement are essential to a full doctrine; as Calvin saw so clearly it is the wholeness of Christ's obedience that atones and makes reconciliation possible; incarnation and atonement need to be kept in a proper relationship, and this is done when we recognize the necessity of speaking of Christ's work in terms of substitution, and also in terms of representation. Thus we can agree with Aulén when he writes:

"It is clear, however, that the affirmations of Christian faith to the effect that the work of Christ was "for us," "for our sake," ultimately include the conception "in our stead."³

1 - The Death of Jesus - A. B. Macaulay - pp.156-157.

2 - Op. cit. - p.158 - See the whole section of Macaulay's book from p.156 to p.158 on Substitution and Representation.

3 - Quoted in: The Cross in the New Testament - L. Morris, p.408.

Since this is the case there is no need to choose between so-called substitutionary and representative doctrines of Christ's work, as though these were mutually exclusive. The fulness of the truth is contained neither in saying that Christ suffered 'in our stead', nor in stating that Christ suffered 'on our behalf.' Both doctrines are necessary. Representation and Substitution must be regarded as complementary. And this is precisely how Candlish viewed them in his theology.

In emphasizing substitution, Candlish was at one with Calvin. Paul van Buren sees the heart of Calvin's theology as being expressed in the title of his book: Christ in Our Place, with its sub-title, The Substitutionary Character of Calvin's Doctrine of Reconciliation. However, Calvin not only stressed the fact of the substitutionary character of Christ's work, he also emphasized the representative aspect. For Calvin, both were two aspects of the one work of Christ. Thus van Buren can speak of Calvin as teaching that:

"Christ did not die as a single man, alone and to himself; He died as our representative, so that we are united with Him in His death, because of the union He has made between Himself and ourselves by becoming our true Substitute, and we have therefore died with Him."¹

1 - Christ in Our Place - P. van Buren - p.80.

d) The Atoning Work of Christus Victor

Thus far, our study has revealed that Candlish lays great stress in his doctrine of atonement, on both the incarnational and the forensic aspects. We have seen the importance of Christ's role as Kinsman-Redeemer for atonement; and we have noted the cruciality of Christ's role as both our Representative and Substitute in the work of redemption. We must now go on to set down the significance of what has been called the Christus Victor theme, in Candlish's theology. Here the emphasis is upon the role of Christ as the triumphant King who destroys the powers of evil in His ministry, but supremely in His victorious death and Resurrection, by which He is exalted to the Father's right hand. In other words, Candlish not only stresses the work of Christ as Prophet and Priest, he also includes in his doctrine of atonement, the role of Christ as the victorious King.

The exposition of Christ's work in terms of the triple office of prophet, priest and king, is characteristic of Reformed Theology. It is especially associated with the name of Calvin. No doubt, as Bosc has pointed out,¹ the origin of the doctrine does not lie in Calvin but in the Fathers, though they never attempted to reduce the triple office to a systematic form. Where Calvin makes his unique contribution is in using the triple office to describe the work of Christ. Speaking on this, Bosc says:

"The place at which Calvin clearly breaks new ground is in making the three offices different points of departure from which it is possible and necessary to consider the mediatory work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and which, when they have been fully explored, allow the work to be comprehended in its fulness."²

1 - The Kingly Office of the Lord Jesus Christ - Jean Bosc, Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd: 1959 - See pp.5-6.

2 - Op. cit. - p.6.

If the question be raised as to why we should select from the many Biblical terms used to describe Christ and His work, those of prophet, priest and king, the answer lies in the fact that Jesus is pre-eminently the Christ the anointed one. And as Bosc has reminded us, in the Old Testament,

"The three offices into which men are installed by anointing are precisely those of prophet, priest and king."¹

Furthermore, these three offices of prophet, priest and king in the Old Testament, are all connected as mediatory functions of the covenant. And so Bosc can say:

"The offices of prophet, priest and king are thus mediatory functions of the covenant; the men charged with them have been ordained to their office by anointing, the sign of the action of the Holy Spirit; they thereby become instruments of the sovereign grace shown by God to His people in calling them to communion with Himself, and they are also and at the same time members and representatives of the people which is object of divine grace. They are thus.....witnesses and instruments of the same mediation, and announce Him who in His person and work will be the "one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim.2.5)"²

And Bosc's conclusion is as follows:

"It appears then that the doctrine of the three offices can be considered as an adequate formulation of the truth of Scripture concerning the work accomplished by Jesus Christ for us..."³

This same emphasis - so characteristic of Calvin,⁴ - on Jesus as the one who is anointed to be the mediator, which role is fulfilled in His being prophet, priest and king, is also to be found in Candlish. Candlish, for example, makes a great deal of Christ as the mediator of the covenant.⁵ And he, at times, connects Christ the mediator with his role as prophet, priest and king. Thus in speaking of redemption, he can describe it in terms of,

1 - Op. cit. - p.9.

2 - Op. cit. - p.19.

3 - Op. cit. - p.21-22.

4 - See The Institutes, 2:15:1-5.

5 - See, e.g. a sermon, "The Man Christ Jesus" in Candlish's volume of sermons entitled: Sermons by the Late R. S. Candlish, D.D.

"his execution of all the offices which, in his mediatorial character, Christ sustains, as Prophet, Priest, and King; Revealer, Reconciler, Ruler."¹

Candlish also emphasizes from time to time the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the one anointed to be the mediator between God and man. This too, he sometimes links up with the triple office of Christ. Thus he can speak of,

"Christ! the Anointed! whom the Father anoints through the Spirit....Christ, as my advocate with the Father;....true Mediator, - Revealer, Reconciler, Ruler, - Prophet, Priest, and King."²

It is perhaps then not too much to say that Candlish, following in the footsteps of Calvin, regards the triple office of Christ as giving structure to the doctrine of the work of Christ as the mediator between God and man.

Having already dealt with Candlish's teaching on the incarnational and forensic aspects of Christ's atoning work, i.e. on Christ's work as prophet and priest, we must now turn to Candlish's view of Christ's work as king, of Christ as Christus Victor.

That Candlish was aware of the importance of the so-called Dramatic theme in atonement; that he was also fully aware of the neglect of this important aspect of atonement, can be seen from his writings.

"Might we not with advantage dwell more than we do in this aspect of the lordship of Christ...as not merely flowing from his redeeming work for us....but as really forming part of it and entering into it as an essential element. May we not be apt to look on Jesus Christ, our Lord, dying on the cross and rising again, rather as a deliverer provided for us than as a ruler and lord appointed over us?....May it not be good to contemplate the one great transaction of his death and resurrection more than we do, not merely as the work undertaken and accomplished for our sakes and on our behalf, but as in itself, in its very nature, an assertion and recovery of his dominion over us."³

1 - Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians - p.18.

2 - First Epistle of John - p.66.

3 - Sermons by the Late R. S. Candlish, D.D. - pp.276-277.

It is important to note that in expounding the work of Christ in terms of Christ the victorious king who defeats principalities and powers, Candlish does not limit this work to that of the cross and resurrection. Candlish sees this theme of Christus Victor as one that includes the ministry of Christ as well as his life and death. Candlish regards the coming of the Son of God as a divine invasion in which Christ the king does battle with the forces of evil and death throughout his whole ministry. The forces of evil which were unleashed at Calvary are the very same forces with which Christ had to contend throughout his whole ministry. Thus Candlish makes much of Satan's constant attack upon the Sonship of Christ - especially in the Temptations - and how Christ emerges victorious by his life of holiness and perfect obedience which he renders to the Father even unto the death on the cross. Did Christ, asks Candlish,

"overpower and overmaster Satan by the swift bolt of omnipotent wrath, casting him down summarily to his appointed place? Was it that of sovereign command, bidding him away by a mere word? No. The power of his might was the deep inward consciousness of his Sonship; his being the Son of God, in whom the Father was well pleased. It was upon that point that the tempter assailed him with his wiles; his methods of deceit. He would have him to use, or abuse, his Sonship for personal ends; for his relief from pain, from the humiliation of legal service and the penal cross...He would have him, as the Son, to make the stones bread....and to accept the dominion of the world on terms, not of conquest but of compromise. And so it was all throughout, till the crisis of the garden. There also the Lord was attacked by Satan. And the attack was on what might seem to Satan his vulnerable side; his Sonship!.....But that very Sonship was the power of his might. In the consciousness of it he was strong. In the assertion of it he stood against the wiles of the devil...."¹

The climax, of course, of this struggle against the forces of evil and death, is, as Candlish emphasizes, to be seen in the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is here that He is seen pre-eminently as the victorious king,

¹ - Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians - R. S. Candlish - pp.350-351.

as the triumphant Lord.

"It is....the legitimate consequence and crowning result, of his dying and rising again, that he is Christ and Lord."¹

By stressing the place of both Christ's ministry and his death and resurrection in his role of Christus Victor, we see once more how Candlish holds together the Incarnation and Atonement with respect to the work of Christ. His kingly office is not just his victory on the cross over principalities and powers, important though that is; rather Christ the King, the triumphant victor over evil and death is seen in his fulness in the total struggle of the Servant-Son who, by His holy life and perfect obedience to the Father's will climaxed in His death on the cross, defeats the principalities and powers, and is exalted as Christus Victor indeed. It is important to understand that Candlish, in setting forth the work of Christ in terms of the Dramatic theme, does not, by isolating this from the two other important aspects of atonement, leave himself open to the charge of duallism. In the influential work on the atonement by Aulén, we see this very thing. Aulén, in his anxiety to stress the Dramatic theme, divorces it from the forensic aspect of redemption, and thus leaves himself open to the charge of teaching, at least by implication, that the ransom is paid to the Devil. The suggestion that the ransom was paid to the devil is one that is almost fiercely resisted by Candlish, and time and time again, he repudiates the notion, insisting that the ransom is given by and paid to God the Father. Thus he writes:

"Redemption through Christ's blood may be thought....to be something of the nature of a price paid, or a ransom given, in order that he, (i.e. Satan) being satisfied or appeased by the cruel death of so great champion on their behalf, may be induced to let his victims go free. There is no room for any such imagination..."²

1 - Sermons by the Late R. S. Candlish - p.271.

2 - Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians - pp.19-20.

Indeed, continues Candlish, speaking of God,

"it is by a ransom provided by himself, and offered to himself."¹

that redemption is accomplished on our behalf.

In another volume Candlish returns to the same theme:

"No doubt, the prince of this world has acquired dominion over us. He has led us captive. And having seduced us, he is our accuser; accusing us of the very sin into which he has seduced us; urging against us the sentence of condemnation. So he tries to keep us helplessly bound in the fetters of conscious guilt. From all that thralldom our Lord delivers us; but not surely by giving himself an offering to the prince of this world. He has no title to demand satisfaction, as if the world, or as if we, were lawfully his. He cannot stipulate for any conditions, or any price of our release; nor will our Deliverer so far acknowledge his interest, as to appease him with any ransom. When the Lord Jesus, therefore, appears at the bar of heaven's righteous judgment, laden with the burden, covered with the foul robe of your guilt, the Father alone has to do with him. The prince of this world has nothing in him."²

The assertion that a ransom is paid by Christ to the devil is seen to be impossible when the forensic and the Dramatic aspects of the atonement are held together. Thus in the New Testament, redemption is seen to have a two-fold connotation. It is first, redemption from the judgment or the wrath of God; and second, it is redemption from evil powers than enslave man. But these two aspects of redemption are very closely related. Because of sin, man is exposed to the judgment and wrath of God. But the evil powers exploit this situation which man finds himself in. These evil powers use God's law - which is basically good - to fetter man so that the law becomes a tyrant. This is what Paul means by the law being the strength of sin. The law which is God's righteous demand upon man, is really good; but the law is used by the evil powers to exploit man's guilty situation, accusing the sinner of failure to fulfil that very law, thus bringing him into an even greater bondage to the slavery of sin. But when man is put into a right relation with God and

1 - Op. cit. - p.24.

2 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - R. S. Candlish - p.71.

to the law, then the law can no longer accuse and judge the sinner who is now freed from its bondage. Thus Christ's work of redemption involves not only the expiation of man's guilt and the justification of the sinner, but also, and at the same time frees man from the bondage of principalities and powers. It is of quite crucial importance then to grasp the fact that redemption from the evil powers who exploit man's guilty situation, is a result of redemption as the expiation of our guilt.¹ Freedom from the bondage of evil powers presupposes our deliverance from the judgment of God through the expiation of our guilt by the One who fulfills all righteousness in our place. It is precisely this point that Candlish saw. And he emphasized this very fact that it is because Christ has fulfilled the law and expiated our guilt on the cross, that we are free from the law and thus from the principalities and powers that exploited the law in order to enslave man. All of this is set forth in crystal clear fashion in the following:

"He spoils principalities and powers, making a show of them openly in his cross. Through death he destroys him that has the power of death, that is the devil, and delivers them who through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage. But the death through which he effected this release is his giving himself as a ransom for many, not to the adversary, but to the Father; to God, the holy law-giver and righteous judge. For it is the Father's justice, the wrath of God lying upon us, that makes us helpless under the prince whose service we have chosen, and whose lie we are fain to believe. That is the secret of his hold upon us. But Jesus, our shepherd, by satisfying that justice and himself enduring that wrath, emancipates us from the thralldom under which the hopeless sense of condemnation keeps us. Redeeming us from the sentence of the divine law and justice, he delivers us out of the hand of all our enemies."²

Candlish thus saw clearly that redemption involves our justification in the sight of God by the expiation of our guilt, thus causing man to be free not only from the law, but also from those principalities and powers that exploited the law to enslave man.

1 - This is precisely what Aulen fails to see in Christus Victor.

2 - The Gospel of Forgiveness - R. S. Candlish - pp.62-63.

"Does not redemption", he asks, "embrace...a purchased deliverance from all the evils of sin, and a purchased title to all the glory of the heavenly inheritance? From the wrath to come, from death and him that hath the power of death, redemption fully saves you. It ensures your victory over all your enemies, even the last enemy, which is death. It takes the sting from death, and from all the grief which death occasions; for that sting is sin, and sin has no more power to bring you.....under condemnation again. It makes you more than conquerors through him who loved you...."¹

It will be apparent that Candlish, in his exposition of the work of atonement, not only sees the importance of the Christus Victor theme, but also sees how important it is that this aspect of atonement be seen in relation to the other aspects, particularly to the forensic or judicial aspect. It would be too much to claim that Candlish has set forth for us a full doctrine of the atonement in any systematic way. But this much is certain, he has taught us that any doctrine of atonement that would be true to the Biblical witness must take into account the incarnational, the forensic, and the dramatic aspects of redemption.

1 - Op. cit. - pp.318-319.

CHAPTER VII

Candlish's Contribution to the Development of Scottish Theology

Candlish's contribution to the development of Scottish theology can only be properly assessed when it is considered in the context of the theology of his day which provides the background for his thought. The theological framework within which Candlish worked out his own theology has its origins in a Western theology which laid such inordinate emphasis upon the doctrine of the Atonement that a corresponding neglect of the doctrine of the Incarnation ensued. This false separation of incarnation and atonement was carried over into Scottish theology. Indeed in Scotland, this failure to relate the incarnation to the atonement in a proper way was carried a stage further by the tendency to place undue emphasis on the extent of the Atonement, thus neglecting other important aspects. The kind of theology that resulted from this false separation of incarnation and atonement linked with an undue emphasis on the extent of atonement, has been set down in summary fashion in The Sum of Saving Knowledge, a document that enshrines the popular Federal theology which wielded such an enormous influence in the life of the Scottish Church during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.

In The Sum of Saving Knowledge, the whole plan of salvation revolves round the concept of the three covenants of Federal theology. These three covenants are: The Covenant of Works: The Covenant of Redemption: and The Covenant of Grace. This covenant scheme, which ought not to be confused with the Reformed emphasis on the one covenant of grace, works with an impersonal conception of grace whereby God is set forth as a "contract" God, and salvation is reduced to a bargaining arrangement between God and the sinner. This treatise also gives an unusual prominence to the doctrine of election. Indeed, election is worked out in a non-Christological way, so that it is true

to say that the Christology of this document is conditioned by its abstract legalistic doctrine of election. Thus, in The Sum of Saving Knowledge, the Christology is made subservient to a legalistic doctrine of election.

Regarding the doctrine of atonement taught in this treatise, the emphasis is wholly upon the legal and forensic aspect of atonement. The substitution of Christ for guilty sinners is stressed, but at the expense of that equally important truth, that Christ the second Adam is also our Representative on the Cross. The doctrine of justification is also treated purely in forensic terms with no attempt being made to relate it to the fact of the Incarnation. The doctrine of the believers' union with Christ is also neglected. No place is given in this treatise to the question of how the Incarnation is related to the Atonement; consequently, not only is the importance of the Incarnation ignored, the saving significance of the humanity of Christ is quite overlooked. At best, the Incarnation is regarded as purely instrumental in the theology of The Sum of Saving Knowledge.

This kind of Federal theology just described, and most clearly set forth in The Sum of Saving Knowledge, was the popular theology in Candlish's day. It was then, against the background of this forensic scheme of theology in which election conditioned Christology, and where the failure to relate the Incarnation to the Atonement in a proper way resulted in a failure to appreciate the significance of the humanity of Christ, that Candlish worked out his own theology. And the conclusions he came to differed quite radically in places from those set down in The Sum of Saving Knowledge, having much more in common with the theology of the Reformation and that of the early Scottish Reformers, than they had with the Federal theology of his own day.

One of Candlish's main contributions to the development of Scottish theology, is his attempt to recover the Biblical emphasis on the sonship of

believers. Candlish believed that the doctrine of Adoption had been for too long neglected by the Church. Indeed, he felt that the neglect of this doctrine could be traced back as far as the early Church Fathers. Calvin, he felt, while not entirely ignoring the subject, was too much taken up with the question of justification by faith to give anything like adequate attention to the doctrine of the sonship of believers. Candlish also believed that the Westminster Confession of Faith, for the most part ignored Adoption, but where it did deal with the subject, it only succeeded in confusing the issue by confounding Adoption with Justification. In the theology of the Westminster Confession, the doctrine of Adoption was set out as a constituent part of the doctrine of Justification. Candlish was in no doubt whatsoever that such a view was quite wrong. In the first place, such a view confused the two doctrines and failed to set them forth as separate benefits which come to us in and through Christ. In the second place, this confounding of Adoption and Justification meant that Adoption was regarded as a forensic relationship, and Candlish was very sure that such was not the case. Indeed, his study of the Scriptures in relation to the sonship of believers led him to the conclusion that adoption could best be described as the believer's union and communion with Christ in His Sonship. In the Westminster Standards, Adoption was, by virtue of its close association with Justification, regarded as a benefit that comes to us through the redemption that Christ wrought for sinful men. Candlish was convinced that, while it was true that Justification was grounded upon the atoning work of Christ in which He is accepted by the Father as the Righteous Servant who has taken our place and fulfilled our righteousness by the whole course of His obedience, the case was different with Adoption. Adoption, he taught, was grounded not on the fact of Christ's atoning work, but upon the fact of Christ's Eternal Sonship which we share

through our union with Him. Thus while Candlish viewed Justification as our union and communion with Christ in His righteousness, he regarded Adoption as union and communion with Christ in His Sonship.

In working out his theology of Adoption, Candlish saw all too clearly that a Biblical view of Adoption could only be sustained by giving a much more central place to the Incarnation than was the case in the Westminster Standards or in the Federal theology of that day. For Candlish, the whole question of the believer's sonship took its rise in the One Eternal Sonship of Christ and nowhere else. Since in his view, originally and primarily there was only one Sonship, the Sonship of Christ the Eternal Son of the Father, it was, for Candlish, self-evident, that Sonship could only be known and experienced by men if it was revealed by the Father in heaven. Since true Sonship originally belonged to Jesus Christ and not to man, before that Sonship could be known and experienced by men it must first be revealed. The chosen method of revelation by God was the Incarnation of His only-begotten Son. Thus God sent His Son into the world clothed with our human nature to reveal a Sonship that originally only belonged to His Son, but which He wished to share with man. As Candlish keeps insisting, God sent His Son to demonstrate that Sonship could be enjoyed in our human nature under ordinary conditions, and that therefore this Sonship could be communicated to sinful men. Thus the doctrine of Adoption, whereby we have union and communion with Christ in His Sonship, takes its rise from the fact of the Incarnation. Candlish was wont to stress that God sent His Son into the world to die for sinful men; he never for a moment lost sight of the fact that the Cross sets forth the very nerve of the Christian Gospel; Christ came to die, that is central to salvation, but He came for more than that; He came to make us sons. Indeed the goal and crown of the Christian life lies in our sonship in our Risen Head.

In recovering this Biblical emphasis upon our Sonship and its close relation to the fact of the Incarnation, Candlish was making it clear that he dissented from the popular view that the incarnation was purely instrumental. For Candlish, the Incarnation must never be viewed simply as a step that was only necessary because Christ had to die on the Cross. It was, of course, necessary that Christ take our flesh in order that He might die, but this in no way exhausts the importance of the Incarnation. The Incarnation is wrought for more than His death. It is wrought, in the first place, in order that Sonship - true Sonship - Sonship that is capable of being revealed, shared and enjoyed by sinful men, might be experienced as a wondrous reality, as through union and communion with God's only-beloved Son, we are united with Him so that we are adopted into the family of God as His sons.¹

Furthermore, since the crux of Candlish's teaching on Adoption lay in the fact that the One Eternal Sonship is now enjoyed in His incarnate state in His human nature, of necessity Candlish laid great emphasis upon the humanity of Christ. Candlish held, of course, the orthodox view of the two natures of Christ as set forth in the Chalcedonian symbol. Thus in his writings he never tires of stressing the fact that Christ was 'very God of very God', that He was truly homoousion with the Father. But if he sought to do justice to the Deity of Christ, no less did He stress the importance of the humanity of the Saviour. This is why the doctrine of the Virgin Birth figures so prominently in his writings, preserving as it does, the humanity of Christ. Candlish saw

1 - This sharing by the believer in Christ's Sonship involves, for Candlish a close analogical relation between Christ's birth in Incarnation, and our new birth in Regeneration, both effected by the Holy Spirit as the sole agent. Through the Incarnation a new humanity was born in which we share through the work of the Holy Spirit. Cf. The Fatherhood of God - pp. 142-145.

clearly that if Christ did not really become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, then our salvation was but a myth. He realized that sonship could only be communicated to believers through union with Christ, because in the first place Sonship was now experienced by Christ the Word made flesh in His human nature. And it is precisely because we are united to Christ in His human nature that we are able to have union and communion with Him in His Sonship and thus be adopted as sons and daughters into the family of God. For Candlish true evangelical sonship which is communicated to believers, stands or falls with the real humanity of the Redeemer, a fact that Candlish places great emphasis upon throughout his writings. It is for this reason that Candlish makes so much of the fact that Christ enjoyed the life of Sonship in His incarnate state in His human nature. His life of Sonship was a life of faith and obedience under the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Candlish repeatedly repudiates the idea that in His life of Sonship here on earth, Christ lived in dependence of His deity and His eternal relation which He sustained to the Father. In His incarnate life, Christ is the Father's obedient Servant, doing the Father's will, and living by the impulse of the Holy Spirit. His life on earth was a life of faith.

For Candlish this was vital; that the Sonship was not only joined to Christ's human nature, but that His actual experience of the life of Sonship was enjoyed in His human nature. Thus the real humanity of Christ, so stressed by Calvin, and so ignored in the Federal scheme of theology, is absolutely crucial in Candlish's theology, and especially in his doctrine of the sonship of believers. Sonship could never have been communicated to believers if Christ had not possessed a truly human nature, and had not His Sonship been joined to that human nature, believers would never have been able to enter into the glory of sonship in Christ.

As a study of the history of Christian doctrine shows, Christian theology

has not always succeeded in holding a doctrine of salvation in which both the Person and the Work of Christ receive their proper emphasis. If the tendency in the East has been to view Christian theology from the point of view of the Incarnation with scant attention to the doctrine of the Atonement, the tendency in the West has been the very opposite, in which the Atonement has tended to displace the importance of the Incarnation. The Church has found it difficult to resist the temptation to stress the one doctrine at the expense of the other, and as a result has often failed to do justice to the fulness of the Gospel by not holding together the Incarnation and Atonement as one wholly integrated act of salvation in Jesus Christ.

In the writings of Candlish we quickly discern a theology in which this false separation between incarnation and atonement is resisted. If there is one thing that Candlish stresses more than another it is the fact that it is the fulness of Christ in His Person, ministry, death and resurrection that has wrought reconciliation for us sinful men. Candlish's view of the redemption which Christ has wrought on our behalf is perfectly summed up in Calvin's words:

"From the time when he took on the form of a servant, he began to pay the price of liberation to redeem us."¹

Thus in making the incarnation central in his theology as he did in formulating his doctrine of adoption, Candlish was not guilty of stressing incarnation in such a way that he failed to do justice to the atonement. Following in the footsteps of Irenaeus and Calvin, Candlish taught that reconciliation is effected by Jesus Christ in the totality of His Person, Life, and

1 - The Institutes of the Christian Religion - John Calvin 2:16:5, p. 507

Death. Atonement was wrought neither by the fact of the Incarnation in isolation, nor was it effected by the death of Christ as an abstraction. Atonement was made by "the whole course of His obedience". In order to accomplish this, Candlish had to snap the theological fetters of the Federal theology in which he was brought up and return to the teaching of Calvin and the early Scottish Reformers. Whereas the Federal theology limited Christ's atoning work to His Passive obedience, thus ignoring the saving importance of the Incarnation and life of Christ, Candlish taught that atonement could never be separated from incarnation, and that the fulness of Christ's redemptive work must be understood in terms of His whole obedience, both Active and Passive. Thus in the formulation of his doctrine of the Atonement, Candlish was forced to challenge the Federal view that atonement could be understood wholly in forensic terms. Candlish never underestimated the importance of the forensic in the doctrine of the Atonement, but he saw, and explicitly taught, that an atonement that was formulated only in terms of the forensic was a doctrine that failed to do justice to the fulness and richness of the New Testament teaching.

Under the influence of Irenaeus and Calvin, Candlish taught that a doctrine of the Atonement that sought to be true to the fulness of the Biblical testimony must be one in which the Incarnation and Atonement are seen as the one act of God in Christ, where the Saviour in the fulness of His Person and Work wrought on our behalf God's salvation.

When we come to ask just how Candlish managed to relate the incarnation to the Atonement in such a way so as to show them as parts of the one great act of God in Christ, we see that there were certain emphases that he made in order to achieve his end. In the first place, Candlish grounded his whole doctrine of the Atonement in the fact of the hypostatic union of Christ. Since the work of atonement is a work that is carried out both from the side of God

as God and from the side of man as man, in the one Person of Jesus Christ, the hypostatic union was, for Candlish, a fundamental presupposition of atonement. Indeed, the Atonement was only possible because of the prior fact of the hypostatic union. It is for this reason that Candlish is wont to stress the office of Mediator as it applies to Christ. Christ is fit to execute the office of "the one mediator between God and man", precisely because in His one undivided Person, He is both God and man through an indissoluble hypostatic union. With Calvin he firmly believed - and this is the basis of his doctrine of atonement - that for

"His work of reconciliation ... the two natures were both necessary; the divine ... to carry out the work that no man could perform; the human, that acting in our place He might include us with Him in what He accomplished."¹

Candlish emphasized the fact of the hypostatic union in order to draw attention to the fact that atonement is the work of Christ who is both true man and true God in the one Person. It was necessary for Christ to become incarnate in order to reveal God to man and reconcile men to God. Hence the importance of the saving humanity. The importance of His divine nature is seen in the fact that it is His deity that guarantees that the two-fold work of revelation and reconciliation is real in its Godward and objective side. For Candlish, the reconciliation which Christ effected was really the hypostatic union at work. And since atonement could only be carried out by One who, by virtue of His Person, was able to act both from the side of man as man, and from the side of God as God, it was "necessary" that there be a hypostatic union of the two natures of Christ.

1 - Christ in Our Place - Paul van Buren - p. 20

One of the errors that abounds in the history of theology is that of seeking to explain the doctrine of atonement by one theory that singles out one aspect of redemption. This error is plainly to be seen in the Federal theology of Candlish's day, which theology sought to fully account for atonement solely in terms of the Passive obedience of Christ. While recognizing the importance of the Passive obedience of Christ on the Cross, Candlish avoided the error of trying to explain the atonement wholly in terms of the passive obedience. Because he saw clearly that atonement is made by the fulness of Christ's obedience, Candlish was careful to lay as much emphasis upon the active obedience as he did upon the passive. To do this Candlish was continually laying great stress upon the life and ministry of Jesus as being absolutely crucial and necessarily integral to a fully-orbed doctrine of atonement. Thus he never tired of emphasizing in his writings that the atoning death of Christ presupposes, and is indissolubly linked up with the atoning life of Jesus. It was Jesus Christ in His fulness who made atonement for sinful men, which attitude is summed up in his own words:

"I speak to them of Christ as being Himself the atonement."¹

Thus Candlish is careful not to speak of reconciliation as if it were effected only by the death of Christ. For Candlish, the death of Christ in the work of atonement is important, but it is not the whole atonement: rather Candlish prefers to view Christ's death, His passive obedience, as the climax, as the fulfilment of that atoning life of obedience which begins with the humiliation of the Son of Man when He took our flesh. By stressing the role of Christ as the obedient Servant-Son who accomplishes salvation by the "whole course of His obedience", Candlish was indebted to his great master and teacher, John Calvin, who also laid great stress on the role of Christ the obedient Servant who effects reconciliation by a life of obedience which reaches its climax on

1 - The Atonement - R.S. Candlish - pp. 232-233

the Cross. Candlish realized that ultimately revelation and reconciliation are inseparable, and that they can only be held together where there is a doctrine of atonement that includes the saving life of Christ as well as the saving death of the Redeemer. In stressing the centrality of the life and ministry of Jesus in the work of atonement, Candlish was again making it clear that he in no way regarded the Incarnation as being simply instrumental.

Another way in which Candlish sets the Incarnation and the Atonement in a properly integrated relationship so that the active and passive obedience of Christ are held together as a whole, is in his insistence that the atoning work of Jesus Christ is both a work of substitution and a work of representation. Candlish's writings abound with references to the work of Christ as a substitutionary work in which Christ takes our place by dying on the Cross and thus paying the penalty for our sin. Because of our sin we are guilty and deserving of God's punishment. Christ as our Substitute steps in and taking our place, accepts the punishment which was our due, and in so doing makes an atonement for our sin and guilt. For Candlish the fact that Christ took our place on the Cross is fundamental to any doctrine of atonement. In thus stressing the fact of substitution in the doctrine of atonement, Candlish was only underlining what is plainly taught in the New Testament itself, both by Christ and His apostles. Candlish was careful to guard himself against the charge of teaching an immoral doctrine of substitution whereby we receive only a legal and imputed righteousness, by emphasizing that substitution must always be linked up with our union with Christ. Substitution, when linked with the believer's union with Christ is central to any Biblical doctrine of atonement. Thus Candlish was not afraid to lay great emphasis upon the fact that Christ's death for us sinful men is truly a substitutionary act. However, in his doctrine of the work of Christ on the Cross, Candlish never rested content with substitution as exhausting the work of Christ. To be sure, His Passive obedience was important; the forensic aspect of atonement vital; but for a full doctrine of

Christ's work on the Cross, Candlish contended it was also necessary to see Christ's work as a representative work. What Christ did, He did in our stead, but equally important in Candlish's eyes was what Christ did as one of us. Thus Candlish was also led to lay just as much importance on the representative aspect of Christ's work. Here, as has already been pointed out, he was both debtor to Irenaeus and Calvin, both of whom make much of Christ as the second Adam who recapitulates creation and assumes our flesh as the Representative of the new humanity through His Incarnation. This emphasis upon the ontological aspect of redemption whereby Christ is our Representative is further to be seen in Candlish's oft-repeated description of Christ as our Kinsman-redeemer, in which the stress falls upon Christ as our Elder Brother.

Thus in stressing both Substitution and Representation Candlish did not succumb to the temptation of stressing one at the expense of the other and thus finishing up with a fragmentary doctrine of atonement. This temptation to stress Substitution at the expense of Christ's Representation can be seen in Scottish theology in such diverse theologies as that of Federalism and the theology of the great James Denney. Candlish in showing that both Substitution and Representation are necessary for a full doctrine of atonement, a doctrine which would give a proper place both to the Active and Passive obedience of Christ, and which would lay equal emphasis on both the incarnational and forensic aspects of redemption, has rendered signal service to the development of theology in Scotland. Today, when voices are still raised in defence of 'substitution only' or 'representation only', we can learn from Candlish that these two ways of looking at the death of Christ are not antithetical, but complementary, and that for a full doctrine of atonement that seeks to do justice to the whole of the Biblical testimony, it is necessary that both the substitutionary and the representative aspects of redemption be kept together as parts of the one great fact of atonement.

There is still another aspect of the work of atonement that finds expression in the New Testament, especially in the writings of Paul, which is known variously as the Dramatic or the Classic theme of redemption. Here the emphasis falls upon the work of Christ the all-conquering Lord who triumphs over the forces of evil in His ministry, death and resurrection. Here the emphasis is upon Christ as the victorious king. In recent years this theme has been expounded by Aulén in his book, Christus Victor. In this book Aulén not only stresses the Dramatic theme, he sees it as, by itself, giving a full explanation of the work of atonement. Aulén, is, of course wrong. No one would challenge the importance of the Dramatic theme in connection with the New Testament doctrine of the atonement, but to suppose that the atonement can be contained by this one aspect, is to be guilty of ignoring whole sections of the Biblical teaching on the atonement.

Candlish in his writings, sees the importance of the Dramatic theme. Indeed, in one place at least he asks if theology has not been guilty of neglecting this important Biblical stress.¹ But he sees this theme as a part of the whole. Furthermore, unlike Aulén, Candlish sees that the Dramatic theme can only be properly interpreted when it is seen in relation to the forensic aspect of atonement. We are freed from the evil forces that bind us through the Law, precisely because in the first place Christ has atoned for our guilt by His substitutionary act. Thus Candlish not only saw the importance of the Dramatic theme, he also saw it in its proper relationship to other aspects of the doctrine of atonement.

While Candlish nowhere sets down in systematic form his doctrine of atonement, it is very clear from a reading of his works that a whole doctrine of

1 - See, e.g. Sermons by the Late R.S. Candlish, D.D. - pp. 276-277

atonement must include the work of Christ as our Substitute, our Representative, and our Christus Victor. But in another way, a doctrine of the atonement that takes into account the fulness of the Biblical testimony, and relates in a proper way incarnation and atonement, must take into account these three main aspects of atonement, namely, the incarnational, the forensic, and the dramatic.

In suggesting that Candlish has made a notable contribution to the development of Scottish theology, one does not wish to leave the impression that there are no flaws in his theology. However, in criticizing the weaknesses in his theology, it must be borne in mind that Candlish never set out in any systematic form, his theological convictions, except, perhaps, in his Cunningham Lectures, where he discusses quite exhaustively the sonship of believers and the Fatherhood of God. Had Candlish been able to set down in a systematic way his theological conclusions, no doubt he would have become aware of the inconsistencies in his system, and done something to remedy them.

Regarding Candlish's doctrine of the sonship of believers, there are two points in his treatment which need to be criticized. First, it must be insisted that, when Candlish defines the original relation that subsisted between God and man as subjectship, he is resorting to unbiblical categories. Certainly Candlish was absolutely right in insisting that there was a crucial difference between the original relation subsisting between God and man, and the relation of evangelical sonship that is established between Christ and the believer through union with Christ. As Rainy wisely says:

"... no justice is or can be done ... by those who perplex all Scripture teaching, postulating a Sonship for all mankind such as Scripture ascribes to believers."¹

There is - and Candlish was right to insist upon it - a difference between the original relation subsisting between man and God and the evange-

1 - Memorials of R.S. Candlish - W. Wilson, D.D. - p. 620

lical sonship the believer enjoys in Christ, but it is a mistake to make use of unbiblical categories to describe that original relation. Candlish admits that in the original state there is something of an "anticipation" of the coming sonship in Christ. It would have been better had he explored this thought rather than speaking of the original state as that of subjectship.

In the second place, exception must be taken to Candlish's repeated insistence that the sonship of believers is identical with the One Eternal Sonship of Christ. Candlish, of course, was anxious to preserve the Biblical teaching which establishes a very close connection indeed between Christ's Sonship and the believer's. Since we are "partakers of the Divine nature", there can be no question that Scripture sees a real analogy between Christ's own Sonship and the sonship of believers. However, it is one thing to see a close analogical relationship between the two sonships, but an entirely different thing to see these two sonships as identical. Christ is the Son by virtue of the eternal relation He sustains to the Father. Thus His Sonship is as unique as His Divine nature. We are sons through our relationship to Him; thus our sonship, while closely related to His, is a derived sonship. Candlish was right in seeing the sonship of believers as union and communion with Christ in His Sonship, but he was very wide of the mark, when he confused the human with the Divine, by insisting that the sonship of believers is identical with the one eternal Sonship of Christ.

At certain points in Candlish's thinking, one can still see the remnants of the influence of the Federal scheme of theology. This can be seen, for example, in his treatment of the doctrine of our union with Christ, which is so central in Candlish's theology. In the main, Candlish follows the teaching of Calvin and the early Scottish Reformers who insisted that firstly and foremostly we are united to Christ, following which, we are justified,

regenerated, and adopted as sons. It is true to say that this is precisely Candlish's position in the bulk of his writings. However, occasionally, he appears to take the Federal view that justification, regeneration, and adoption come first, and are followed by union with Christ. It is quite evident that Candlish is unaware of this inconsistency in his theology, but the inconsistency is there nevertheless. However, while this confusion of thought does exist in Candlish's teaching, there can be no doubt whatsoever, that his main emphasis is along the lines of Calvin, where union with Christ is prior to the benefits we receive from Him.

Another inconsistency that appears in Candlish's theology, is that Christ is the Head and Representative of the whole race, yet His reconciling work on the Cross is a Limited Atonement. Logically, it is not possible to hold these two positions. Federal theology was at least consistent when, together with its doctrine of a Limited Atonement, it taught that Christ was Head, not of the race, but of the elect. If Candlish had followed his theological position through to its proper conclusion, he would have had to discard his belief in a Limited Atonement. Two things make this so. First, Candlish taught, and repeatedly emphasized, that Christ was indeed the Head and Representative of the whole race, not just of the elect.¹ Second, as we have pointed out so often in this thesis, Candlish regarded the Incarnation and Atonement as of a piece, as aspects of the one great redemptive act of God in Christ. If, then incarnation and atonement are not to be separated, and if Christ is truly the Head and Representative of the whole race, then it follows that He must have died for the whole race and not just for the elect.

1 - Life in a Risen Saviour - R.S. Candlish - pp. 200-201

As we have pointed out elsewhere, the doctrine of a Limited Atonement was expounded in Candlish's early years, and it is apparent that while he never actually repudiated this doctrine, in later years it was ignored and virtually disappeared from his theological writings. It is difficult therefore to resist the conclusion that Candlish had come to see that the atoning work of Christ could not be understood as a Limited Atonement.

Another flaw in Candlish's theology lies in the confusion that he sometimes creates in his interpretation of the work of Christ as a "satisfaction to Divine justice." In his book entitled, The Atonement, in which he confesses his debt to Principal Hill of St. Andrews, Candlish interprets satisfaction in terms of Roman law with its legal categories. Here, of course, satisfaction is thought of in terms of merit, as e.g. in Tertullian. This was also the view of satisfaction inherent in Federal theology with its teaching that God needed to be appeased to be gracious. Since Principal Hill, who influenced Candlish so much in his book on the atonement, was steeped in Federal theology, it is not altogether surprising perhaps, that Candlish interprets satisfaction legalistically in this book. However, it needs to be noted that it is only in this one book and nowhere else, that Candlish understands "satisfaction to Divine justice" in this legalistic way. In point of fact, his writings abound with references in which he expressly repudiates this legalistic notion of satisfaction with its teaching that God needs to be placated in order to be gracious.¹ Thus, based on his other writings, we must conclude that Candlish's real teaching on the "satisfaction to Divine justice" falls in line with Paul's

1 - See, e.g. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians - R.S. Candlish, pp. 19-20

teaching in Romans where satisfaction is understood in terms of Christ meeting the requirements of God which we couldn't meet, by fulfilling the law and all righteousness on our behalf. This means that God really meets His own requirements in the Person of His own Son. Obviously, this has nothing in common with those legal notions of satisfaction such as we find in Tertullian and in Federal theology. And Candlish's teaching is inconsistent in that he occasionally lapses back into Federal views of satisfaction. However, apart from his one volume on the atonement, it is perfectly clear that Candlish, following the theology of the Epistle to the Romans, and in line with the theology of the Reformation, interprets satisfaction in terms of God meeting His own requirements in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ.

In a penetrating analysis of the modern state of theology,¹ Professor George Hendry has insisted that the fragmentation of the gospel which can be witnessed on every hand, is due, in very large measure, to the false asparation between incarnation and atonement. Today, in Western theology, atonement is still largely conceived of in terms of what Christ has accomplished on the Cross quite apart from His Incarnation and ministry. The emphasis is upon what Christ has done in His death as bearing no real relation to what He has done for us in His Incarnation and ministry. Atonement has been limited, for the most part, to Christ's passive obedience, instead of being conceived of in terms of the "whole course of His obedience".

This criticism is particularly true in Scotland, where, from the seventeenth century until the present day, theology has been greatly influenced by a theological tradition that has departed from the teaching of the Reformers, and

1 - The Gospel of the Incarnation - G.S. Hendry

sought to lay an almost exclusive emphasis upon the extent of the atonement. The result of this departure from the classical Reformed teaching on the atonement as understood by men like Calvin and the early Scottish Reformers, has been a serious distortion of the doctrines of the atonement and the incarnation.

In the first place, it has meant that the doctrine of the Incarnation has been neglected, and not given the central place that a thorough-going New Testament theology demands.

In the second place, this undue emphasis upon the extent of the atonement has resulted in a quite false separation between incarnation and atonement, due to a failure to appreciate the real significance of the saving humanity of Jesus Christ. In other words, the total obedience which effected reconciliation has been limited to His passive obedience.

And in the third place, this emphasis has resulted in a quite false separation between Revelation and Reconciliation.

It is the contention of the writer of this thesis, that it is precisely at these three points that Candlish makes his supreme contribution to the development of Scottish theology. The neglect of the Incarnation, so characteristic of the Federal tradition in theology which has so moulded Scottish theology over the past three hundred years, is corrected in the theology of Candlish in two quite decisive ways. First, in his recovery of the important Biblical teaching regarding the sonship of believers, Candlish, grounding this sonship on the one Eternal Sonship of Christ Himself, was forced to restore to a central place in his theology, the much-neglected doctrine of the incarnation.

Second, in seeing that reconciliation is effected by Christ Himself, in the totality of His Incarnation, ministry, and death; in realizing that the Federal view of a purely forensic atonement fails to do justice to the saving humanity of the Redeemer, Candlish, restored the Incarnation to its proper relationship to the atonement. He recovered the teaching of the New Testament

under the influence of Irenaeus and Calvin, that incarnation and atonement must be seen as the one integrated act of God in Jesus Christ for our salvation. This he did by stressing the fact that Christ is the Head of the whole race and our kinsman-redeemer, and by grounding his doctrine of atonement on the fact of the hypostatic union. Also by stressing the role of Christ as one in which both substitution and representation each plays its part, the one, laying emphasis upon the passive obedience and forensic aspect of atonement, the other, stressing the active obedience and incarnational aspect of atonement, Candlish showed clearly how a truly Biblical doctrine of atonement must hold both incarnation and atonement as a whole.

And finally, in relating incarnation to atonement as he did, Candlish, by stressing the saving life as well as the atoning death of Christ, was able to show that ultimately Revelation and Reconciliation can, and must, be held together.

The influence of the Federal tradition on the theology of Scotland, with its neglect of the Incarnation, and its emphasis on a one-sided doctrine of atonement that lays inordinate stress on the forensic, and isolates the Passive obedience of Christ from the active, is one that won't be remedied overnight. But a study of the theology of Robert Smith Candlish would undoubtedly go a long way toward turning Scottish theology back to the rock from whence it was hewn - the rock of a Reformed theology as taught by John Calvin and the early Scottish Reformers, in which incarnation and atonement are seen in their proper relationship as the one act of God in Christ for us men and our salvation.

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